

Project: Matrix

by JACCO

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Summary: Umbrella had another project going at the time of the Raccoon City outbreak, but they weren't expecting an unwary Marine to get in their way. Resident evil halflife crossover

1. An American Warzone

A/N: This story is a crossover of Half-life and Resident Evil. The Raccoon City outbreak in this story uses the timeline of the movie Resident Evil: Apocalypse. Please please review, I have my cookie set to accept anonymous ones so that even readers who are not members of fanfiction can do so. I really hope you enjoy.

Project: Matrix

Chapter 1- An American Warzone

>

**>Subject: Nathan Sheffield
Male, age 23**

**>Training: United States Marine Corps, Special Forces
Rank: Corporal**

**>Current Assignment: Hazardous Environment Combat Unit, Santego Military Base, Arizona
Mission: Classified**

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**>Black Mesa Research Facility
Black Mesa, New Mexico**

>

> Corporal Nathan Sheffield had been trailing Gordon Freeman since he had stepped off the Osprey. He was not about to give up and let his fellow Marines deaths go unpunished. He was going to avenge his comrades, the same comrades that Freeman had killed. Even his best friend had fallen before the mad scientist, supposedly the first of his victims.<p>

Nathan Sheffield was usually a happy-go-lucky guy, but he truly hated Freeman for killing his friends. They were good Marines. Nathan knew what his orders were, to silence the facility, kill everything that wasn't wearing camo and a P.C.V. He also knew he should at least try

to see things from Freeman's point of view, that he was just trying to survive. But in Sheffield's eyes, that didn't constitute running around in full bulletproof body armor and killing everything there was to kill. Freeman knew good and well he wouldn't stand a chance without his H.E.V. and he was taking full advantage of it.

No matter how Sheffield looked at it to see how Freeman was thinking, he just couldn't excuse the fact that he had an advantage and he was using it to kill his friends. He wanted to see things from the scientist's perspective, but he just couldn't. He didn't want to kill anyone and he never had before, but if someone was going to die by his hands today, it would be Freeman.

Now Sheffield's team was moving through sector one making their way to Black Mesa central command. Apparently they were under heavy attack and needed assistance.

Three aliens teleported right in front of Sheffield's team and they immediately mowed them down with their MP5's. They moved on and came to a cross section with the hallways. They heard gunfire from what sounded like a pistol. Sheffield put his hand up and signaled them to stop. The four soldiers heard a cry from what sounded like an alien.

"Sheff!" hissed Berkley, one of the members of the team.

Sheffield looked over. Berkley was crouched next to the wall with his back against it. He put two fingers to the green lenses of his gas mask and pointed around the corner. Sheffield leaned over a little bit so he could see.

A security guard took a dive and just avoided the powerful tail of one of the alien lizards. It was futile for the fact that he was attacked by a Headcrab and the lizard smashed him into the wall turning both the alien and the guard into a bloody mess on the wall. Berkley and another member of the team, Nelson, quickly moved around the corner and opened fire. The lizard saw them and tried to spit its acid at them but the two soldiers killed it before it could harm them.

"Delta two-four, come in."

"Delta two-four here." said Sheffield into his radio.

"Change of plans. Get back top side and rendezvous with Delta three-nine and secure sector seven, over."

"Rodger that, orders received." He clicked the radio off and pushed past his team. "Let's go, it sounds like they are having a tough time."

The marines stepped off the elevator and were nearly hit by a blast from one of the aliens. The other members of the team ducked down and fired back. Sheffield tossed a grenade behind a brick wall and saw a gory alien body fly out from behind it.

Nathan led his team across the hangar and out into the open. They could hear gunfire and jets flying overhead. The whole Black Mesa campus had been turned into a war zone. Sheffield wondered why they had been sent in; these were American citizens after all. He was

pretty sure there was something in the Constitution that made it illegal to use military troops against American citizens.

He dismissed the thought and kept his focus on the mission at hand. It was distractions like that that got people killed, especially him and his team. Sheffield would prefer to get out of here alive. When he had joined the Marine Corps, he hadn't expected to actually get thrown into a combat mission, much less one that meant fighting hostile aliens. He had joined to pay for college and to see what it was like to handle actual guns.

Sheffield came from a very protective and wealthy family. He had joined the Marine's eager to get rid of his 'spoiled rich boy' reputation, which he hated to no end because he tried very hard not to be snobby and act like he was better than everyone just because his parents had money. He had also wanted to see the world.

Now he was killing things, but not even out of the country. He was standing here, on American soil, in the New Mexican desert, trying to survive in a self inflicted war zone.

> The team made their way across the warehouse and out into the open where a covered truck was parked. Blood was spattered all over the windshield and the passenger's body was half hanging out and bleeding all over the ground. The driver looked as if he had been pulled through the window and left there.<p>

Sheffield made a hand gesture, signaling Berkley to scout ahead. He did as he was told and moved toward the truck sweeping his gun around looking for threats. Berkley made it to the truck in one piece and signaled for the rest of the team to follow. Sheffield led Nelson and Klive to the truck.

"I saw something; it looked like a security guard. He ran across the parking lot and disappeared into that door." whispered Berkley to Sheffield.

"Leave him, we need to get find Delta three-nine."

They cautiously moved down the road occasionally passing overturned and burning trucks with bodies of their comrades lying around them. They even passed a wrecked tank with flames flickering from inside. The team eventually came to a thick metal blast door and radioed in.

"Delta two-four to command. Come in."

"We read you two-four, report your status."

"We've reached the entrance to sector seven, but the blast door is locked."

"Rodger, I'll try to raise two-nine on the radio, stand by." There was a brief pause and the radio operator came back. "I'm not getting a response, see if your engineer can hack the controls." "Rodger that." Sheffield clicked his radio off and turned to Klive, the engineer. "See if you can get the door open."

"Yes sir." said Klive as he pushed past the other Marines.

Klive used his knife to pry open the metal wall panel and began to

examine the wires that made the key pad work.

"Uh, sir?" Sheffield looked up and saw Nelson staring down the road.

Nathan took a couple of steps to the side and saw what Nelson was worried about. A column of aliens was making their way past the small alley the Marines were in. "Work faster..." he started to say to Klive.

Before he could finish his statement, a green lightning bolt zipped past his head and turned the steel behind him into a molten hole. Nelson opened fire finally realizing the aliens had noticed them.

Sheffield did the same and several of the aliens fell to the ground. Unfortunately all the commotion caught the attention of the other aliens and they turned to shoot their bolts. Nelson dove to the ground and narrowly avoided an energy bolt. Sheffield dropped to one knee and kept firing at the monsters. Berkley finally joined in with his SAW.

Klive frantically worked with the wires trying to get the door open while Sheffield, Berkley, and Nelson tried to give him more time. He cut and skinned various wires and tied them together trying to get a current going and the right combination in. He finished twisting the last wire and tapped a few buttons on the keypad.

The door started to slide open and suddenly stopped about two feet apart. He looked at it and figured it was enough room for them to get through.

"Go! Go! Go!" he yelled above the gunfire.

He slipped through the crack in the door and saw Nelson take a direct bolt in the chest. He flew back and landed on the ground just in front of Sheffield. Berkley started back but kept firing and covered Sheffield as he grabbed Nelson and dragged him through the door. Berkley fired the last of his magazine and sprinted to the door.

Klive hit the buttons to close it and an alien tried to get in but was too late and the doors squished it. The soldiers heard clawing at the heavy metal and knew they had made a narrow escape. Sheffield turned his attention to Nelson and quickly kneeled down. Berkley did the same.

The energy had burned through his Powered Combat Vest, or PCV, and into his flesh. His eyes seemed not to focus on anything and none of them had the training to help him considering he was their team medic. A pool of blood started to form around him and Sheffield cut the straps to his vest with his knife and pulled it off.

Nelson's normally urban-camo shirt was drenched in blood and in the middle was a burn mark where the fabric seemed to have melted to his wound. Blood was leaking down his side. "Morphine..." he managed to say. Sheffield searched Nelson's vest pockets and found the morphine. Nelson was shaking uncontrollably and Berkley was doing all he could to keep his head off the ground and his hand on the wound. Nathan stuck the small morphine needle into his shoulder and squeezed it

dry. He knew Nelson couldn't survive a wound like that, but he did know it was his duty to make him as comfortable as possible. "Get... out of... here..." he gasped. His shaking slowed and his muscles gradually relaxed. "Alive." he finished with his last breath. Nelson stopped moving and his eyes focused on a fixed point.

Sheffield closed his eyes behind his mask and exhaled. Berkley reached over and closed his eyes. Sheffield opened his eyes and ripped Nelson's tags off his neck and pocketed them.

He stood up and took off his helmet and mask. He hated the masks. They made it extremely hot. The cool air hit his face and dried his sweat. He savored the feeling of the cool air hitting his sweaty face, trying to forget one of his team mates had just died.

Nathan Sheffield was a good looking twenty-three year old. Right now his face was obscured by dirt and grime that had somehow made its way under his mask, but normally he had smooth skin and a slightly rounded face. He had short light brown hair and he looked out at the world through deep blue eyes. His muscular chest was hidden under his black and dark green PCV and urban style fatigues. His hands were covered in fingerless gloves and his shirt sleeves were sloppily rolled up to his biceps partly to make it easier to move and partly because it was ninety-three degrees outside and it made it cooler even though his vest had a next generation cooling gel that helped keep his body temperature down.

He placed his helmet and mask in his heavy olive drab backpack. He hadn't noticed it before but Klive had been standing there the whole time watching them tend to Nelson. He pushed past Klive and exchanged a look of disgust and remorse with him silently telling him that he was a coward.

Klive looked down and shut his eyes for a moment. "Lets go." said Sheffield tartly.

Without another word, he walked down the hall and Berkley followed behind him. Klive took one last look at Nelson and followed Berkley. The team walked on for a while without a word and finally Sheffield stopped to radio in. "Delta two-four to command."

"Command here, we read you Delta two-four."

"Command, we have entered the compound and there is no sign of Delta three-nine."

"Sir!" yelled Berkley from behind a corner.

"Stand by," said Sheffield into the radio. He ran over to Berkley and looked where he was looking. Two members of Delta three-nine were lying on the ground in a pool of blood. "Scratch that. We found the remains of Delta three-nine. They are dead." There was a pause.

"Rodger that. Your new orders are to find a way into the old teleportation labs and keep the occupants from escaping. We believe there are enemies in there and are trying to use it to escape. Under no circumstances are they to leave."

Sheffield listened and knew they meant security guards and

scientists. "Lethal force is authorized." Nathan exhaled and shook his head.

"Yes sir." He turned to Berkley and clicked off the radio. "You hear that?" he nodded.

"Can't we just detain them?" "I plan to."

"Those aren't our orders." said Klive. "Shut up. You didn't listen. They said lethal force 'authorized'. Not that we need to." replied Sheffield.

He was happy to see that Berkley had some sort of human morals, even if it was against their standing orders.

A loud crash came from a small room behind Berkley and he turned around. A human form with some sort of creature attached to its head came lumbering out. His pants had the urban pattern that told the Marines he was one of the Delta three-nine people. The second one followed him out and they started toward the Marines.

Berkley opened fire with his SAW and tore the first one to shreds. Just as the human-alien went down, the machine gun jammed and Berkley started trying to fix it. He didn't notice the creature take a swing at him with its tentacle-like arm. It impacted on his shoulder and sent him flying into the wall. Klive threw himself at the creature to give Berkley a chance to get up and also to show he wasn't a coward.

Nathan took the chance to raise his gun and realized it had one bullet left in it. He noticed a small rat-like alien crawling toward Berkley. It threw its self at him and he put his arms up to stop it. It was trying to reach his face. Sheffield turned and fired the last bullet of his clip into the Headcrab and watched Berkley throw it aside and continue to try to un-jam his gun.

Sheffield dropped his MP5 and ripped out his Desert Eagle and clicked on the laser sight. The human-alien creature flung Klive against the wall, shattering his skull and killing him instantly. Nathan saw the red dot appear on the creatures head. It turned toward him and took a step. He hoped to god that the human inside was dead and he wouldn't be killing anyone. The zombie took another step and lunged at him.

Sheffield squeezed off a shot and kept pulling the trigger. The alien that covered the soldiers head exploded in a flurry of yellow blood and gore. The body collided with him and they both fell to the ground. Sheffield rolled the body off him and got up. He holstered his pistol and walked over to his MP5.

Berkley finally got his gun un-jammed and was seeing to Klive.

"He's dead." he said as Sheffield picked up his modified MP5 and inserted another clip.

Berkley hated to do it, but searched Klive's body for supplies and found four MP5 magazines. He tossed them to Sheffield who put them into his vest pockets. Berkley also tossed him two of the three grenades that had been Klive's.

Sheffield led Berkley down the hall that led by the room the human-aliens came out of. They followed the hall and eventually came to a room with a large elevator in it. Berkley saw a stationary radio on a table and a shot gun next to it. He walked over and inspected the shot gun before slinging it over his shoulder.

Sheffield of course went to the radio and turned the frequency knob until voices could be heard calling for backup and giving orders.

"It's Freeman! He's coming down the-" the Marine was cut off by a burst of gunfire. More gunfire erupted in what sounded like their comrades going at it with Freeman. "Send back up! Freeman is tearing through us-" "Stop him! Stop him!" "The suit! We can't get through the suit!" "Fire in the hole!" they heard an explosion and more gunfire before all went silent. "He's in the rail tunnels! Cut the power-"

Both Berkley and Sheffield knew what had happened. Gordon Freeman had once again torn through the Marines and survived to slaughter another group of them.

"It's kind of depressing. Hearing them call for us to help and knowing we can't." said a voice from the doorway. Sheffield spun around, his gun level ready to kill anything. Berkley did the same and they realized it was a Marine that had said it. "Corporal Sheffield I presume?"

"I am, and who are you?" Corporal Mathews, Delta three-eight. My team is making sure the perimeter is secure, they will be here momentarily."

"I didn't know command was sending another team to help us. How did you get in?"

"There have been reports from this sector about some security guard killing our men, and doing a damn good job. Apparently he's helping Rosenberg and the others escape. We got in through the old tunnels beneath this building. We got lucky and found a small elevator that led right up into the offices. We just had to break through a few badly done repairs." he finished. "Where is your team?"

"Dead." Sheffield replied. Five more Marines entered the room.

"It's all clear sir. There are a few fresh bodies but most of it's clear."

"That would be my team." said Sheffield. The Marine that had just reported turned and noticed Sheffield and Berkley standing next to the radio. "Sorry sir."

"Did you get the name of the guard yet?" asked Corporal Mathews to the Marine that had just walked in.

"Yes sir. Uh," he looked at a small piece of paper. "Barney Calhoun. He's worked here for three years and had a spotless service record. Missed one day for sick leave in all that time."

"Good work." said Mathews. The Marine nodded and took a seat next to Sheffield at the radio. He was one of the soldiers wearing a mask

just as Sheffield had been doing earlier. Mathews, however was wearing a red beret instead of a mask or helmet. "Are you ready to go down and hunt some scientists?" he asked every one in the room. Mathews' squad let out a "hurrah!" and he turned to Sheffield and Berkley. They merely nodded and stepped into the elevator.

The small elevator descended to the floor below revealing a large room with alien and security guard bodies strewn everywhere. Blood was on the walls and floor and it immediately became obvious that a battle had taken place in the large room. The elevator came to a stop and the soldiers stepped off onto the bloody floor.

Mathews' team moved across it sweeping their guns around and making sure there were no hostiles. Once they were sure it was secure Mathews took point and led the soldiers into the next room.

Berkley moved to follow them but Sheffield held him back until they disappeared around the corner.

"With them here we can't keep those people alive. We have to warn them that they are coming." he told Berkley.

"That's treason there." replied Sheffield. "But your right. We can't let them be murdered like animals."

"How do we get there with out running into him?"

Sheffield looked around and found a vent about three feet above the floor. He walked over to it, drew his combat knife, and pried it open.

"It'll be a tight squeeze, but we should be able to fit."

"Where does it lead?"

"Dunno, but we're going to find out." he said as he re-sheathed his knife and pulled himself into the small space. He crawled and heard Berkley put his gun in and lift himself into the vent also.

"Now I know what a TV dinner feels like." Berkley recited.

"I hate that movie." said Sheffield.

"Are you kidding? I love that movie. Bruce Willis is awesome."

Sheffield suddenly stopped and Berkley nearly ran into him. Sheffield looked down through a vent and watched Mathews' team go right under them and look around.

"Where is Sheffield?" he asked.

The Marines looked around and finally realized that Berkley and Sheffield were missing. Nathan looked back at Berkley. "Did you close the vent?" he mouthed. Berkley looked at him trying to understand what he was saying and finally realized it. He started backing up quietly toward the opening they had come out of.

Mathews reached for his radio and Nathan realized he was going to call them. He quickly reached for his vest and struggled to free his

handheld radio from the pocket it was in. Mathews clicked the radio. Sheffield freed it and clicked it off just as Mathews spoke.

"Mathews to Sheffield, come in." he said. Sheffield exhaled and heard Berkley come up behind him. He looked back and Berkley nodded. "Mathews to Sheffield, come in." he said again. He waited for a response and finally signaled for his team to go ahead. "Sheffield, if you get this, meet us at the lab entrance." he said into his radio before walking away.

Nathan quietly exhaled and continued crawling through the cramped ventilation shaft before finally coming to an exit. It was blocked by a heavy grate and as far as Sheffield could tell it was at least a fifteen foot drop to the floor.

He smashed his shoulder against the grate as hard as he could and looked at it. All he had done was dent it. He slammed into it again and again until he heard it start to give away. He rammed it one last time and sent it clattering to the floor.

"Hold my feet." he said to Berkley.

The Marine grabbed his ankles and helped Sheffield inch out of the vent until he was hanging out against the wall. Sheffield put his hands up above his head and braced for the fall. "Drop me."

Berkley let go and Nathan plummeted through the air before landing hardly on his braced arms and falling over onto his back. He rubbed his forearms and got up, bringing up his MP5 and sweeping it around the room.

"Are you okay?" asked Berkley from the vent. Sheffield finished looking around the room before replying.

"I'm fine. Wait there, let me find a box or something."

"Right." said Berkley.

Sheffield walked across the room, keeping his gun leveled.

The room was not small. It looked like a warehouse; boxes of all size and shape filled the room and were stacked to the roof against the walls. Parts of the storage area had so many boxes stacked that it was like a maze.

Sheffield looked around for a fork lift or something he could use to help get Berkley down without breaking his neck. Nathan knew he was lucky he didn't break his neck from the fall, that all he got was bruised fore-arms.

He spotted a bright yellow fork lift in the corner near a stack of heavy boxes and jogged over to it. The body of a worker was hanging half out of it with his head drooped and blood all over the floor. His normally bright orange jumpsuit was crimson now and he had a hole in his chest as if something had taken a bite out of him.

Sheffield pulled the body out and onto the floor. Surprisingly there was no blood on the seat or controls. He sat down, and quickly dismissed the eerie feeling that the man had been sitting where he

was when he died.

He started the lift, got a feel of how it worked, and drove it over to the vent Berkley was in. Sheffield raised the fork up to the vent and Berkley climbed onto it. Nathan brought it down and Berkley hopped off. Sheffield turned the lift off and got out.

Berkley got out his PDA and activated the map. The President had authorized a satellite to be used specifically for this mission along with four AWACS and if necessary, two tactical nuclear warheads. The satellite was to help pinpoint soldiers locations within the facility by the tracking devices in their PCV's so they could pull up the map if they got lost and be able to find a way out.

"The old teleportation labs are right below us."

"How do we get down?"

"There should be some sort of service elevator somewhere outside this warehouse."

"Which way?"

"Um, east." he said pointing toward the maze of boxes. Sheffield sighed.

"That's great. We better get moving if we're going to beat Mathews to the labs." he said and made sure his gun was going to work if he needed it.

Before they could say another word, a small alien appeared from the maze of boxes and stopped. It was small and looked like its mouth was its entire head.

The creature chirped and squeaked happily upon seeing them. Sheffield raised his gun and aimed, but held his fire. Berkley flipped through the pictures of aliens on the screen of his PDA.

"Uh, it's called a 'Hound-eye'." he said.

"Is it a threat?"

"Only if it perceives us as one to it."

The small creature hopped toward them and stopped about five feet away. It looked as if it were surveying them. Sheffield gripped his gun tighter and the alien just looked at him. It stared at him for a moment and then turned and hopped away.

Both of them let out a sigh of relief and started toward the maze of boxes.

2. Now Leaving Black Mesa

****_Chapter 2- Now Leaving Black Mesa_****

Doctor Louis Berry sat at a computer in the security office under the warehouse next to the old teleportation labs. He was watching the two soldiers fight their way through the boxes toward the service

elevator.

Dr. Berry had a feeling they would make it out of the boxes. He kind of hoped they didn't because if they did, he would have to use the turrets to kill them and make sure they couldn't hurt anyone before Calhoun got back from the alien planet and everyone could safely leave. It seemed a pity to waste their fighting ability.

He wondered why the government had sent the Marines to kill everyone. There was no reason for it, and it violated the constitution. Posse Comotatus. That was the constitutional guarantee that stated the military could not be used against American citizens.

The two Marines were nearly half way through the chaotic path of boxes and they were un-injured as far as Dr. Berry could tell.

The bigger of the two landed a vicious blow to a Vortigaunt, one of the lightning aliens, and sent it flying into a box. The thinner one, Dr. Berry saw he was a corporal from the stripes on his arm, tossed a grenade behind a corner of the box and Dr. Berry saw the explosion on another section of the monitor. The two soldiers moved around the box and disposed of the remaining aliens.

Dr. Berry kept switching camera views to keep them in sight as they fought their way through hellish maze. They managed to smash their way out and sprinted toward the elevator. He quickly switched on the automatic machine turrets and much to his dismay, they pivoted and started firing at the aliens instead of the soldiers.

The corporal hit that button and the doors closed just in time to stop a lightning bolt. The turrets mowed down the aliens and spattered their blood all over the boxes.

Dr. Berry quickly tapped a few keys on the keyboard and switched the camera view. Every defensive turret between him and the elevator was now active. Anything that moved would be killed. Several alien Grunts appeared on the screen and ran past the camera. Dr. Berry turned it and watched them engage one of the turrets.

The Grunts were very intelligent creatures and very tough. They quickly disposed of the first turret and ran around a corner only to engage a team of Marines. This time they weren't so lucky. The soldiers launched a salvo of grenades from their MP5's and completely incinerated the aliens.

Chunks of alien gore littered the hallway. The Marines scanned the ceiling for any more turrets. They relaxed when they were sure and started reloading grenades into the launching tubes of their guns. The troops systematically moved through the halls and took great care to take out the turrets.

He realized he had made a mistake by activating all the turrets. It alerted the soldiers to them and now they were getting past them. He hoped Calhoun could get back in time to stop them before they killed everybody.

He remembered that the other two soldiers were still on the loose and started switching through cameras until he found them climbing into a vent. These people were resourceful, using the ventilation system to get where they were going. That was unlucky for them though, because

Dr. Berry could simply activate the Ventilation Cleanout System, or VCS.

The VCS sent a blast of air down the shaft and blew anything to the end or the vent. Once that cycle was done, it would seal off the vents, and send super hot gas that had the ability to disintegrate anything that couldn't stand the heat. The metal that the vents were made out of was about the only thing that could stand the heat.

He typed in a few commands and activated the VCS.

Sheffield kept crawling with Berkley right behind him. He wished they didn't have to come in here. It was too cramped and he didn't know what might be in there.

Black Mesa was out in the desert, so there could be poisonous spiders or scorpions for all he knew. Every time he moved his limbs to propel him foreword he felt as if he might get stung or bitten. The last thing Nathan wanted was to die of a spider bite, especially after fighting his way through scores of aliens.

Sheffield and Berkley heard something rumble underneath them. Sheffield looked back at Berkley.

"What was that?"

"I don't know."

A strong invisible force slammed into Sheffield who flew back and hit Berkley.

The air forced them through the small space and they tried to grab anything they could to stop them but the air was too strong and kept propelling them.

Berkley hit the end of the vent first and Sheffield followed him and landed on him. The wind kept going for another minute or so and finally stopped. Silence once again filled the cramped space and Berkeley pushed Sheffield off him.

"Its a VCS!" he yelled finally realizing.

He grabbed his gun and started hitting the solid metal that was below them. Sheffield could already feel the heat that was radiating through the metal. Berkley fired six rounds into it and again started hitting. He finally broke through and shoved Nathan through the hole who plummeted six feet before painfully hitting the ground. Berkley jumped through after him and Sheffield rolled to the right just in time to avoid getting squashed.

Berkley rolled to the left and both of them felt the intense heat hit the ground where they had been not three seconds before. The super-hot gas began making the tiles on the floor bubble and melt.

Sheffield and Berkley exchanged glances and got to their feet.

"Sheffield!" The two soldiers turned around cursed their luck. Mathews was standing behind them and had his gun half pointed at

them. "What the hell are you doing crawling through the vents?"

"We got separated from you and all the sudden the turrets turned on and we got into the vents to avoid them." lied Sheffield thinking quickly.

He had always been a fast thinker and was good at lying because of it. He hoped that it would come in handy one day. Now it looked like it wasn't a useless skill after all.

"You didn't know that there is a VCS system here?" asked Mathews.

"Well, now we do."

"Stay with us, we have enough firepower to destroy the turrets."

"Are you giving me an order?" asked Sheffield somewhat defensively and moving toward Mathews.

"No..." Mathews paused. "Sir."

"That's what I thought. Where are we?"

Sheffield was technically in charge of the whole mission to stop the scientists because he was a full Corporal and Mathews was a Lance Corporal, which meant that he was not technically a full Corporal and that Sheffield was in charge.

Mathews glared at him for a moment and then checked his map. They were literally just around the corner from the elevator that led down to the old labs.

"We better hurry, the scientists could be walking through a portal right now." remarked one of Mathews' men.

The lights suddenly dimmed and came back.

"No, now they could." said Berkley. Sheffield ran toward the elevator and led the six soldiers behind him. He figured he still had a chance of getting in there and trying to make it look like they got away before he got there.

The group turned the corner and froze. There was nothing there. It was a hallway with a hole in the wall covered by some broken boards. Sheffield motioned for Berkley and one of Mathews' men to scout ahead. They moved up and swept their guns around at the ceiling and hole in the wall.

"Clear!" said the masked soldier. Sheffield led the rest of them into the hall. He examined the hole and determined that it had been made by a grenade. He stuck his head in and realized it was an elevator shaft.

"Here is the entrance." he said to the others. Mathews came up behind him and looked in. "There is the button, can you reach it?"

The button to bring the elevator up was on the far wall, so obviously once everyone was down there, it wasn't supposed to come back up

unless they were coming from down below.

"I'll hold your arm and you lean in and press it." suggested Mathews.

Sheffield nodded and offered Mathews his forearm. He gripped it tight, almost painfully and Sheffield leaned in. It didn't occur to him that his life was in Mathews' hands and he could let go if he was unhappy about Sheffield embarrassing him by pulling rank. Nonetheless, Nathan kept leaning forward and stretched his hand out for the button.

Just as he was about to press it, the gears above started to whine and the cable next to him started to move.

"Pull me back!" he yelled.

Mathews tried but started to slide on the smooth tiles.

"Help!" he yelled and Berkley came to the rescue.

Berkley was a high school football player so he was pretty big and strong. With little effort, he grabbed hold of Mathews and pulled him back and all three of them landed on the ground.

The elevator stopped and Mathews' men fired without hesitation. The two unlucky scientists never knew what hit them before their blood started to pool in the elevator. The two soldiers that fired went in and pulled the bodies out and tossed them against the wall.

A door at the far end of the hall opened and a scientist stepped out and opened fire with some sort of laser weapon. The weird particles tore through the first soldier with little resistance and left small burn marks in the wall behind him.

Mathews' assault man opened fire with his SAW and the scientist with his laser weapon. The beams shredded the soldier and the fifty caliber bullets sent half of the scientist onto the wall in a gory mess. The Marines' body fell to the ground but didn't start to bleed. The first Marine to get shot was slumped against the wall and he wasn't bleeding either.

"Get his gun, lets have a look." ordered Mathews.

One of the other soldiers by the name of Davis, turned.

"Sir?" he asked to Sheffield.

"Yeah."

Davis walked down the hall and carefully picked up the laser weapon. It looked like a prototype, as it was not sleek and had many exposed parts. The weapon had what looked like copper tubes for conducting energy.

He walked back and handed it to Mathews.

"He came from the security control room, he was controlling the turrets and everything." said Davis.

"Have you ever seen anything like this?" Mathews asked Sheffield.

He shook his head. "No. Maybe it's from the experimental weaponry labs." he replied.

"Let's get down there before they figure out what happened." said Mathews as he walked into the elevator. Sheffield led Davis, Berkley, and another one of Mathews' men, Werner into the elevator. Berkley hit the button and the small elevator descended into the old labs.

A trio of unsuspecting security guards was standing near the door to the lab. They looked over and instead of seeing the scientists, they saw the Marines. The three guards tried to draw their guns but Werner and Mathews cut them down with their MP5's.

"Davis, blow the door." ordered Mathews.

The engineer did as he was told and began setting up the C4 to blow the door with. He worked with speed and efficiency and was done within two minutes.

"Fire in the hole!" he yelled as everybody took cover. A loud explosion rattled the room and large sharp pieces of metal shot into the lab.

Sheffield sprinted around the corner and was the first into the room. He tried to see through the smoke. Everything was completely obscured by the dust. He saw something move out of the corner of his eye and turned. It was a security guard. The dust started to settle and the guard fired a few shots from his pistol at Sheffield who ducked just in time.

Davis happened to be behind him and caught the bullets in the head. He immediately fell to the ground. Nathan dodged to the control panel and saw a scientist dive into the portal. It shut off and the screen on the panel changed and showed a bar that was slowly recharging.

The guard, Sheffield saw the back of his armor and read the name Calhoun, tossed a grenade at Mathews and Werner. It detonated and sent them flying against the wall. Berkley fired a few random shots back and took cover behind what was left of the door.

The bar read fully charged now and the portal machine formed the ball of energy. The guard ran for it and Sheffield felt that he couldn't let him get away, he had killed a lot of Marines and Nathan figured he probably wouldn't get a shot at Freeman so maybe he would be able to avenge some of the casualties this guy caused.

Sheffield sprinted from behind his cover and lunged at Calhoun trying to keep him from getting to the portal. Needless to say, his plan didn't work and he heard Berkley scream his name before they both fell into the ball of light. The world flashed green and black at random intervals and everything went dark.

3. Welcome to Raccoon City

**_Chapter 3- Welcome to Raccoon City
>**

> Nathan Sheffield materialized in the air and realized it just as he hit something hard. It collapsed under him and he fell further and landed on something very hard just to be rained on by pieces of wood and plaster.<p>

He lay there for a minute, painfully rolled over, and checked to see if his gun was still with him. It was. Sheffield looked around and found his bearings. He was in a hallway of some kind and realized it was a school hallway due to the lockers lining the walls. A hole was in the ceiling and looked as if it had been on fire at one point, not long ago. The walls were charred and debris was everywhere.

Sheffield realized that was why he had come through the ceiling so easily. He got to his feet. Harsh fluorescent light was streaming in the hole from the floor above, and Sheffield walked around looking for someone to tell him where he was. He could be anywhere. Those scientists had teleported somewhere else, apparently not here.

It didn't seem right for a school to be so deserted at two-thirty in the afternoon. Then again it looked as if there had been a fire so it was very well a possibility that the students had panicked and fled the school. Nathan also noted that the guard, Calhoun, wasn't there, so obviously he had been teleported somewhere else.

Something clattered to the floor in the room next to him and interrupted his thoughts. Sheffield leveled his gun and pointed it in the direction of the sound.

"Come out, hands up." he said. The room went quiet for a second and then he heard a soft moan. A man limped into sight and through a burned hole in the wall. He looked deformed, his face was covered in blood, especially around his mouth, and he was limping severely to one side. The man started toward him.

"Freeze." he said threateningly, moving his finger closer to the trigger.

The man kept moving toward him. Sheffield fired a single shot into the man's leg. He tripped and recovered, showing no signs of pain. It simply hissed at him and started toward Sheffield again.

Nathan couldn't believe what he was seeing. Those were holo-point bullets and the guy didn't even feel it. His soldier instincts took over and he aimed higher. Nathan fired a single shot into his chest. Bits of blood and flesh exploded out and he fell back onto the ground.

The thing squirmed and tried to get up. It was bittersweet for Sheffield. He was happy he didn't kill the guy, but he also knew he was in danger, and his enemy wouldn't die. The man was almost fully up now and Sheffield pulled the trigger and held it for a full three seconds. The bullets ripped into the man and he fell back.

The 'super' man hit the ground with a sickening thud and blood issued from the numerous bullet holes in his body. Sheffield slung his MP5 over his shoulder and drew his Desert Eagle. He approached the body carefully after waiting a few seconds to make sure it wouldn't get back up. He kept the small red laser trained on its head. The man twitched and made a move to get up.

"Bullshit!" screamed Sheffield and fired into its head. Half of it disappeared in a flurry of gore, which was sent flying all over the locker behind it. Nathan's stomach lurched as he realized what he had just done. "God forgive me." he muttered to himself.

He heard a crunching behind him and immediately spun ready to blast anything behind. Much to his surprise, a girl was standing there with her arms crossed and looking very scared. She couldn't be more than sixteen. Nathan didn't lower his gun, however, he wasn't sure if she was going to try to kill him too. He didn't get any bad feelings from his threat assessment training, but he didn't want to take any chances.

She merely stared at him with her deep chestnut eyes. Her long blonde hair was messy and untamed, and was wearing a red spaghetti strap shirt and ripped jeans around her knees. Her face was that of a scared girl and she looked as if she had been crying and was on the verge of tears again.

Nathan saw this and lowered his gun. He slowly approached her so not to scare her and holstered his pistol. He put out his hand, and smiled kindly.

"I'm Nathan." he said. She uncrossed her arms and slowly reached toward his hand.

"S- Sarah." she stuttered. Sheffield closed his fingers around her hand and moved toward her. He almost regretted wearing his fingerless gloves because it probably felt intimidating to her. Then again, his whole image probably looked intimidating. He kneeled down in front of her to get a better height with her. "Sarah, I need you to tell me what's going on here." he said kindly but urgently. He knew it sounded kind of insensitive, but being a marine, he needed to know what was going on at all times.

Her eyes moved across his face as she took in every detail. She nodded after a moment and motioned him to follow her. Sarah led him into a classroom about ten feet away and then shoved a desk against the door. It looked as if she had been hiding there for only a few hours. The blinds were drawn on the windows and she had moved the teacher's desk around so it was facing the window. That way she could hide under it and not be seen from outside.

"I don't really know what's happening," she started and sat back down. "This morning nothing was wrong. Then throughout the day we kept hearing about riots breaking out around the city. All of a sudden Mr. Franks comes on the PA and says that school is closing down for the day and the police department is asking everyone to go home. Next thing I know, there is a fire in the hall and people were screaming and dying and attacking each other. I hid in here and have been here since." she finished.

Sheffield was surprised at how much she had just said, she was probably in shock, but still talking and thinking clearly.

"Attacking each other?" he repeated.

"Yeah- they were like the one you just killed. Trying to bite

everyone."

"Bite-" he was cut short by the window shattering and one of the crazy people thumping to the floor. Sarah screamed and dove under the teacher's desk and Sheffield aimed his MP5 at the man. It moaned and tried to crawl toward them. He opened fire and emptied the rest of his clip into the man's head and back.

Nathan quickly reloaded and aimed back at the body. It didn't move. The room went silent for a minute and both of them jumped when the small window on the door shattered and a bloody hand came through it.

Come on!" he yelled and grabbed Sarah's arm. He pulled her out from under the desk and over to the window. Two more hands came through the door window and Sheffield heard at least three of them out there. He lifted Sarah up, noticing how light she was, and helped her through the window. She knew how much danger they were in.

The crazy people finally smashed through the door and stumbled in. Sheffield did a sweep of bullets into them and took the opportunity for them to recover to heft himself through the window. He landed near Sarah and froze at the sight before him.

Chaos was everywhere. Cars were burning, papers littered the street, and broken glass sparkled in the sun. Police cars were formed into a barricade and blood was spattered all over them. Bullet shells were all over the ground around them, but strangely there were no bodies.

Nathan was so shocked by the scene before him that only Sarah's scream saved him from having a chunk taken out of his neck by one of the crazies. He dodged around and missed the man's teeth by inches.

It was then that he realized what he was seeing. He had watched hours and hours of scary movies when he was growing up. Only one thing matched this. The limping, the biting, the moaning and extreme resilience. A zombie. He couldn't deny it. They were the living dead and there was one way to kill them.

He aimed at the man's head and fired a single bullet. The holo-point opened up the back of the zombie's head and sent brain matter all over the wall. It collapsed to the ground and stopped moving.

Sheffield's mood lightened at the realization that he hadn't killed an actual person. It was a dead person that he had made dead permanently.

He turned back to Sarah. She once again crossed her arms over her stomach and waited for Nathan to make a move.

"Let's go, we need to find other survivors." he said, taking his heavy pack off. He opened it and started rummaging through it until he found what he was looking for. He revealed a Beretta and handed it to Sarah. She cautiously took it. "You know how to use these things right?" She shook her head.

Sheffield smiled and turned it over in her hand. "Safety. It won't

fire with it on." He clicked it off and pointed out the clip release. When it runs out, you hit this and slide another magazine into it." He took it and showed her. The magazine slid out into his hand. "Then you slide it back in, and pull this back hard." He shoved the clip back in and pulled the top back. "Then your ready to go. Aim for their head."

She seemed nervous but took it nonetheless.

"I have a car." she squeaked. Nathan turned.

"Where?"

"The parking lot, other side of the school."

"Good. That's good. We can use it to get out of here." She nodded. "I have heard rumors that the Umbrella Corporation has sealed the city though..."

"Umbrella? Why would they do that?"

"They practically own this city." she said a little more coolly. Sheffield knew this was a good sign. It meant she was beginning to feel safer with him and it also meant that she wouldn't go into severe shock and die. That was the last thing he needed, a dead teenage girl o his conscience. He knew he had to keep her talking as they made their way around the school.

"How could they seal the city?" he asked.

"I don't know. I have only heard rumors." she said as they rounded a corner and came into view of the parking lot. Several undead people were walking around in circles as if they didn't know what to do.

"Which car is yours?" he whispered. She pointed to an SUV about three rows in from the front door. "How fast can you run?" he asked her, never taking his eyes off the zombies.

"I don't know." she said, getting scared again.

"Okay, you run as fast as you can to the car and I'll cover-" he stopped himself remembering that she was not a soldier. "I'll keep them off you. Understand?"

"Yeah." "Once you get the car, drive to me and we'll get the hell out of here." he said. She nodded quickly. "Ready?" She nodded again. "Go!" She took off without hesitation and sprinted down the hill toward her car.

Nathan drew his Desert Eagle and lined the sight up with the closest zombie that started toward Sarah. He could barely see the red dot from where he was but pulled the trigger anyway. The loud boom alerted everything to their presence and they all started stumbling toward the girl. Sheffield sprinted down the hill and fired at another one that was getting close to Sarah. It fell down and he decided his MP5 would be better for the crowd control.

Sarah reached her car and fumbled with her keys trying to open the door. Nathan holstered his Desert Eagle and re-gripped his SMG.

Automatic gunfire rang out across the school campus and several zombies fell before Sheffield's precision fire. Sarah finally got into the car, started it, and drove around to meet Nathan. He opened the passenger door just as his gun clicked dry, and got in. She stepped in the gas and the duo shot out of the parking lot away from the walking dead.

Captain Derek Hallsworth ascended the stairs to the huge gate that guarded Raven's Gate Bridge. The citizens of Raccoon City were panicking, and rightfully so. The T-virus was scary as hell. According to Intel, the city was already forty-five percent infected.

He got to the top of stairs and immediately spotted Major Cain. Hallsworth walked up to the Major and saluted. Cain finished what he was saying to one of the other guards before he turned around.

"You wanted to see me?"

"Captain." he said with his thick German accent. "I would like you to take your best men and go into the city to find out if doctor Ashford's daughter is at the crash site."

"Yes sir." he said and immediately turned around to get his men and gear. Cain was not one for conversation. Hallsworth descended the stairs. A car passed through the open gate and the Umbrella guards stepped in front of it again.

They were unique in their look. They wore all black armor and clothes and black helmets with visors that concealed their identity. Hallsworth himself was wearing the black armor but not the helmet. He felt it was an unnecessary asset.

He walked across the pavement and onto the dead grass that made up the field that Umbrella was using as the campground. He marveled at how fast Umbrella could act. Hallsworth still couldn't figure out how the corporation had erected a wall around the city in less than thirteen hours. He figured with a bottomless pocket, they could do anything.

That still took a hell of a lot of manpower to do such a thing and all those people had to be kept quiet. He dismissed the thought figuring he'd let the higher-ups worry about that. He was just a grunt with a job to do.

Hallsworth wasn't actually a grunt. He was one of the senior most field commanders for Umbrella's security forces for the United States. Not many people of his rank got to stay in the field.

A woman walked up to him and saluted.

"Sir, I have a chopper prepped for you and your team. Whenever you are ready." she said. Hallsworth nodded.

"I'd like you to assemble six of the best people we have out here. I want to depart in fifteen minutes."

"Yes sir." she replied, and turned away. Hallsworth kept on his track to the armory tent thinking about what gun he was going to use. Most likely the AR-15. He loved that gun. It was reliable and

powerful.

He entered the tent and looked around on the various tables. Guns and grenades of all kinds were on the three long tables and clips of ammo filled numerous cardboard boxes under the tables. The boxes were marked with the names of their respective guns.

Hallsworth walked across the tent to the far table and picked up his beloved assault rifle. He made sure it worked and slung it around his shoulder before pulling out the box full of AR-15 clips. He slipped them into the slots on his belt and vest. All in all, he had about seven hundred rounds.

Next he went over and picked up a Colt .45 pistol. He pocketed several clips for that too and holstered it after making sure it was loaded and primed. Hallsworth turned and walked out of the tent. He was already full on grenades and figured he had enough ammo to defend against anything that might come his way. Including Nemesis if it so happened.

He knew Nemesis was on his side but he didn't trust that it would remain that way. As much as he liked what he did for Umbrella, he had come to realize over the years that they weren't very competent in keeping their stuff under control. This outbreak in Raccoon City was a perfect example.

The air outside was incredibly hot. He hadn't noticed it before but it was really hot here. Raccoon City was in the middle of a massive heat wave and wearing the heavy black armor didn't help much. It was three in the afternoon and the heat was the highest of the day.

"Sir?" It was the same woman who he had talked to before. "I've assembled your team. They are waiting for you at the chopper." she said.

"Thank you." he replied.

"Good luck sir." Hallsworth nodded at her and headed toward the chopper.

Nathan had forgotten what it was like to drive a civilian car. He was used to the power and handling of a Humvee. The civie cars were a lot lighter and seemed to respond faster. He wasn't really headed anywhere, just trying to find someone that knew what was going on. Partly because he didn't know the city and didn't know a good way out, and if indeed Umbrella had the capability to seal a city the size of this one, they probably weren't going to let the two of them out in case they had the zombie disease.

He assumed it was a disease of some sort, because that's how it was in every movie he had watched. And by Sarah's account of the day's events, that morning was just as normal as ever. So it had to be a disease or virus to have spread so fast.

Sarah had fallen asleep when they had switched sides. He didn't blame her. She'd been through a traumatic day. Seeing all of her friends die and then get up again. He would probably want to sleep too after a day like that. He felt bad that she would have to live with those memories for the rest of her life, especially being as young as she

was. No child should have to witness so much death and destruction. At least he and found her. She had a hell of a better chance being with him then staying under her desk at the school. Nathan was amazed at the fact that she wasn't in a deeper shock than she was.

Sheffield sighed at his thoughts and dismissed them. He switched the radio on only to hear a frantic emergency report.

"-Umbrella Corporation taking control of the situation and sending armed guards to help what's left of the RPD. Repeat, the Raccoon City police department has sealed off the south section of the city. The Umbrella Corporation is taking control of the situation and sending armed guards to help what's left of the RPD." said the reporter. "Raven's Gate Bridge is the checkpoint to get out of the city, but you need to go through a medical examination by Umbrella doctors. RPD is also asking that anyone still within the city to make your way to Raven's Gate Bridge or City Hall. There are Umbrella choppers there to evacuate survivors."

Nathan figured they were in the south section of the city due to the lack of living people. Nonetheless, he needed to know. He hesitated for a moment before reached over and gently shaking Sarah's shoulder. She sleepily opened her eyes.

"Sarah, wake up." he said quietly.

"What?" she mumbled.

"I need to know something."

"Hmmm?"

"Are we in the Southern section of the city?"

"Yeah, why?" she asked, starting to wake up.

"I need you to tell me how to get to City Hall."

"Why?" she was nearly fully awake now.

"There is an evac site there."

"How do you know?" she sounded hopeful.

"Heard it on the radio."

"Oh thank god. Turn left." she said. Nathan did as she said. They drove for about ten minutes marveling at how much destruction had taken place.

Something darted out of an alley and out in front of the car. Sheffield slammed on the breaks and the car skidded to a stop. Both of them were flung forward but caught by their seat belts.

"What was that?" asked Sarah.

"I don't know." replied Nathan as he unbuckled his seatbelt and grabbed his MP5. "Stay here, don't move." he said and opened the door. He braced himself on the door and leaned out, making sure not

to fall.

Keeping a firm grip on the door, he brought his heavy sub-machine gun was in front of his face, ready to blow anything away. He leaned out and looked under the car fully expecting to see a zombie-cat.

To his surprise, it was only a squirrel. He waited for a moment to see if it would attack, and when it didn't he let out a sigh of relief. Sheffield pulled himself back up and put his gun back where it had been.

"It was just a squirrel-" he was cut short by Sarah's scream. Before he could turn around, he was pulled from the car by several zombies. They tossed him onto the ground and tried to jump onto him. He acted fast and kicked the first one in the face. She stumbled back and lost her balance.

A second one lunged at him only to meet Nathan's palm. He smashed its nose in, sending it up into its brain. He hoped it would kill it. The zombie stumbled back and fell to the ground. The woman-zombie had gotten to her feet and was coming back for more.

Sheffield reached up and grabbed the side of the third zombie's head. He viciously turned it, snapping its neck like a twig. The bones crunching were drowned out by a loud crack and the female zombie fell to the ground, a bullet hole in her temple.

Nathan looked around to see who had shot her and realized Sarah was stiffly holding the gun he had given her in her hand. She had a scared yet ruthless look on her face. Her arms dropped into her lap, still holding the pistol.

Sheffield got to his feet and stepped over to the bodies noting that the two he had killed weren't getting up. He got into the car and closed the door lest he get attacked again.

"You didn't need to do that, I could have taken her." he said nicely.

"I had to. I had to prove it to myself that I could." she said. Nathan smiled.

"Very good shot, thank you." She smiled back and he could tell she was really beginning to feel comfortable. He put the car in gear and resumed their course.

"I didn't, you know, kill someone did I?" she asked after a moment of silence. Sheffield shook his head. "No, you didn't kill anyone. They are already dead." Sarah seemed confused at this statement.

"They don't look very dead to me." she said. Nathan was just about to explain when her face lit up. "They're zombies aren't they?" He nodded his head.

"Yes. It's hard to believe, but it makes sense."

"I saw them get up... I should have known!" she said with some anger in her voice. "Go for their head." she muttered to herself.

4. Sheffield's Story

****_Chapter 4: Sheffield's Story_****

Hallsworth looked out the door of his chopper and watched the buildings of Raccoon City pass underneath him. He gripped his assault rifle and bit his lip. He wasn't looking forward to landing. He knew she wouldn't be there, which meant that he and his team would have to trek across the city to find her. That meant they'd be killing and getting killed.

He didn't mind killing. He had done his fair share of it to get this job. He just respected the members of his team and didn't to see any of them fall to the T-virus.

"I have visual on the LZ. ETA, thirty seconds." said the pilot.

"Let's get ready people." said Hallsworth getting out of his seat and standing in front of the six men. He surveyed them, reviewing their names in his head.

The one closest to him was named Frenchie, a nickname given to him by his piers because he refused to tell anyone his name. The next one down was Sandler. He had a reputation for being the most ruthless man in Umbrella's security force. After him was Jaques, who had quite a bit of experience with the T-virus and its effects. Then in the very back was Trina. She never said a word, but was very efficient at killing and doing her job. On the other side of him was Davis, who like Jaques, had a lot of experience with the T-virus. The last member of the team was the most lethal, aside from Hallsworth. He was next in the line of command for field officers which meant that if Hallsworth was killed or retired, he would take over. His name was Price and he and Hallsworth were really good friends.

The chopper started to decelerate and came to a hover about three feet off the ground. Hallsworth was the first off, followed by Price, Davis, Trina, Jaques, Sandler, and finally Frenchie. Hallsworth turned and signaled the pilot to take off. The pilot did a half salute and the chopper ascended into the sky.

"Alright guys, sights on, fan out, make sure the area is secure. You know how it goes. Aim for the head, and only the head." he said as he pulled down a red scope over his right eye. The rest of the team did the same and fanned out. They had landed in a small parking lot surrounded by police cars and semi's.

Their black armor looked out of place, and they were packing way to much firepower for what looked like a simple mission. Hallsworth knew it was never that easy though. He had been working for Umbrella for twenty-five years and knew that they should always plan for every scenario when they went on a mission.

Trina signaled to him that all was clear and the rest of the team returned to the landing site and grouped around Hallsworth.

"Alright," he stated as he laid down a map on the pavement. "According to Intel, Dr. Ashford's daughter was lost somewhere around here." he said circling his finger around a spot downtown. "We should

be able to walk there and be at the site within the hour." he finished. "There is also an Umbrella field security outpost here." he pointed to another spot on the map further up the street. "Command lost contact with it but they said there should be truck there we could use. It will also be our evac point." he paused and folded up the map. "Any questions?"

"Why didn't they just drop us there?" asked Frenchie.

"They wouldn't tell me. All they said was that it was too hot." replied Hallsworth in a somewhat irritated tone. He wasn't mad at Frenchie, just the people at command. He hated not knowing every detail about a mission. That meant there was a possibility to have a 'complication' and complications nearly always meant that people would die.

"Sir, if this is going to be an easy mission, why did you not tell us to pack light?" asked Trina.

"Because I doubt she'll be there." he replied. "I know Angela and she is way to smart to stay in one place, if she is still alive that is." Three shots rang out and the whole team looked around to see what it was.

A zombie toppled to the ground and Sandler lowered his gun.

"Sorry. Continue." he said dismissively.

"Anything else?" asked Hallsworth. The team remained quiet. "Alright, let's move." The team turned and waited for Hallsworth to lead them toward their objective.

"We should go to your house and check on your family." remarked Nathan. Sarah looked at him as if he were stupid.

"I don't think we should. They are probably dead." she said with a little sadness in her voice.

He knew she was probably right, but he felt that she would need closure, if not now, then later.

"It won't hurt to at least check." She looked down and nodded her head.

"Your probably right." she said. "It's just up ahead, turn left on Juno drive." Sheffield did as she said and followed her directions to her house.

Nathan got out of the car and motioned for Sarah to stay where she was. He readied his gun and moved toward the house they were in front of. He kept a close eye on the dead neighbors roaming around their yards. One of them sensed him and started to make its way toward him.

He knew if he shot it then the others would hear it and he wouldn't be able to take them all on. He slung the MP5 around his shoulder and drew his eight inch combat knife. The zombie got within range and in one swift movement sliced the top of its head off. It thudded to the ground minus half a head. He re-sheathed his knife and made his way to the door. Nathan gripped his gun, and pulled it fro his shoulder

before kicking in the door.

The living room beyond was in disarray. The couch was turned over, the lamps were in pieces on the floor, and several windows were smashed. Sheffield immediately knew that things didn't look good for the family. He cautiously stepped into the house, sweeping his gun around.

He slowly moved into the room and across into the kitchen. Things were just as chaotic in there as they were in the living room. Sheffield dumbly lowered his gun and turned around to see just how stupid he was. A male zombie, whom he presumed to be Sarah's dad, bared his teeth and lunged at him. Sheffield put his hands up and caught his face. They tumbled back and fell to the ground.

Sheffield was amazed at the strength he had for the fact that he was dead, or had been at least. He opened and closed his mouth trying to bite him. Sheffield was doing all he could to hold him back. He finally got a good grip on his head and twisted his head. Nathan heard bones crack and the resistance stopped.

He pushed the newly dead body off him and got up. He retrieved his gun and swore at himself for being so dumb. Sheffield made his way down the hall making sure he wouldn't get caught off guard. When he got to the last room in the hall, he found the door barricaded with a large piece of furniture.

Nathan carefully moved the large shelf out of the way and opened the door with one hand while keeping his gun up in the other. A female zombie immediately came at him and he fired a single round blowing brain matter and blood all over the wall.

Nathan regretted doing that because he knew it was Sarah's mother. He looked around the room and heard a squishing sound, realizing that a large chunk of flesh was missing from Sarah's mother's leg. The bone could be seen and she had very little thigh left.

The hunched over form of a small boy was sitting on the ground with his back to Sheffield. His heart sank at the sight of this young boy eating his mother. Sheffield stepped into the room and crushed a piece of glass with his heavy boot.

The sound caught Sarah's brother's attention and he turned his head and looked at Nathan with his dead eyes. He hated to do it, but he knew he had to. He raised his MP5 and aimed. The boy got up and Sheffield closed his eyes, pulled the trigger and heard the body hit the ground.

He exhaled sharply and backed out of the room without opening his eyes. Nathan walked back down the hall, and slung his gun over his shoulder. He walked back out to the car and got in the driver's seat without a word.

He just sat there for a moment under the eye of Sarah. She waited for a minute before speaking, knowing that he was considering something.

"Where they in there?" she asked, almost in a whisper. He nodded his head, but had a grave look on his face. "They're dead aren't they?" Sheffield didn't move. Sarah looked away and tried to fight back

tears.

"Don't fight it. I understand." he said, also in a whisper. Tears fell down her cheeks and she let out a sob. "Let it out." he said. She stopped.

"No. Not now, not yet." she said wiping tears from her eyes and cheeks.

"Sarah, it's not good to keep it in." She looked at him and he knew it was futile to argue. Sheffield sighed. "Is there anything you need before we go?" he asked.

"No." she replied shortly. "I am hungry though."

"Okay. Where can we go?"

"There's a McDonald's just up the street." Sheffield nodded and started the car.

He wished that she would cry, but he knew why she wouldn't. She felt that she needed to keep it in until they got out of here so she would have a fighting spirit. She knew she wouldn't survive keeping the scared little girl thing going.

Nathan hit the gas and they took off toward the McDonald's. He turned onto the main street and pulled into the parking lot of the fast food place. They got out and Sheffield went into the building first. He looked around and shot the few zombies that were in it. Sarah also had her gun ready but put it in her back pocket.

Sheffield shouldered his gun and hopped over the counter. He looked around and found a few hamburgers on the warmer. They were wrapped and ready to eat. He grabbed them and hopped back over the counter to join Sarah.

He presented the three hamburgers to her and she took the one of her choice. They went over to a table that was relatively far away from the bodies and sat down. Sarah started unwrapping her burger and it was then that Nathan realized he was very hungry. He had not eaten much breakfast that morning because they had told them to gear up and get ready to ship out before he had a chance to eat.

His stomach grumbled and Sarah heard it.

"You're hungry. Eat." she said in a motherly way. Sheffield smiled and took a bite. He swallowed.

"I haven't anything today." he said. "They told us to get geared up and ready to ship out before I had a chance to have any breakfast." he said without thinking.

"Where were you going?" She asked, and took another bite of her sandwich.

"Somewhere in New Mexico. Wasn't that long a ride actually. Santego is only like one-hundred miles from Black Mesa."

"Santego? Black Mesa?" she asked confused. It was then that Sheffield realized that he was revealing top secret information.

"Never mind." he said quickly and stuffed a large bite into his mouth.

"No, you started this, now you finish it." she said. Nathan finished chewing and swallowed.

"I'm actually not supposed to talk about it. I can't."

"There is no one here but me. Everyone is dead." Sheffield considered her words and decided it couldn't hurt to tell her. "Wait a minute. How the hell did you get from New Mexico to here?"

"Alright, I'll tell you, but you have to promise that you won't talk about it ever again. Understand?" She had a triumphant look on her face.

"I promise."

"Okay. This is how my sergeant explained things to me. There is a top secret government installation called Black Mesa Research Facility. They do all kinds of stuff for the government, most of which is teleportation."

"Teleportation? Like Star Trek stuff?"

"I don't know, I don't really understand it. Anyway, apparently there was an experiment scheduled for today and someone messed up the material they were testing. Well, this mistake caused, believe it or not, aliens, actual aliens to start teleporting all over the compound. I was sent in with my entire unit to stop these aliens from spreading." he stopped to see how Sarah would react.

She merely stared at him with a blank look. She waited a moment and seemed to recover.

"And?" Nathan was startled by her lack of disbelief.

"Well, we pretty much turned Black Mesa into a war zone, a battle ground."

"Sounds like you've had a rough day." Now Sheffield could tell she was just humoring him.

"Okay, want me to prove it to you?" She raised an eyebrow.

"Think. From your position in the school, you would hear everything and everyone going in and out of the school, correct?"

"Yeah, that's why I went in there. So I could hear if someone would come to rescue me--"

"Right." Sheffield cut her off, "But you didn't hear me come in did you? I crashed through the ceiling and landed on the ground. But you heard that and came out cause you heard my voice and saw me shoot the zombie."

"No, I have not heard you." Sheffield reached into his vest pocket and pulled out his PDA. He slid it across the table to her.

"Access it. It should still have all the mission and battle read-outs." She eyed him suspiciously and picked up the small computer.

"And how exactly did you get here then?" she asked as she started to look through the files and maps of Black Mesa.

"I'm not exactly sure. I got into a firefight with some guys and I fell into a portal or something. Smashed through the roof and landed where you were."

"Who's this Freeman guy?" she asked. Sheffield sighed.

"Is he alive or dead?"

"It says he's alive, near the blast pit. What does that mean?"

"He's still killing my friends." he said with sadness in his voice. Sarah heard this and she looked up at him.

"You are telling the truth aren't you?" Nathan slightly laughed.

"Yeah. It's hard to believe, I know. Hell, I wouldn't even believe it if I hadn't fought them." She put the PDA down.

"How do I know you're not crazy?"

"I guess you don't." he replied dismissively. "One question for you." She nodded. "Where are we?"

"Raccoon City-" Before she could say the rest, a loud crash scared them both and they looked around to see several zombies start to climb through the window. Nathan knew he was really messing up, he should have thought to look up and make sure nothing was there to threaten them.

Sheffield bolted up and leveled his gun. He opened fire and emptied the clip into their heads. Gore spattered the tables and floor.

He quickly reloaded and yelled at Sarah to go. They went out the opposite door they had come in and realized that they wouldn't get back to the car. Hordes of zombies poured through the broken window and others shattered more.

Sarah opened fire with her pistol pegging a few in the head but Sheffield sprayed into their chests just trying to keep them back. The two of them turned and sprinted out the back door and into another parking lot. The walking dead were coming at them from all angles.

Nathan led Sarah down a small ditch and kept running. The zombies tried to follow them down but clumsily stumbled down and landed on the ground. He reloaded his gun while he was running. They ran under an over pass that extended of the ditch. The two of them ran for at least a mile before Sarah finally begged him to stop.

He could have run for at least another mile but remembered the Sarah wasn't a soldier. He slowed down and stopped and Sarah came up panting. Sheffield took the moment to reload and handed another

Beretta clip to his companion.

He started to make his way up the steep concrete ditch. Sarah caught her breath and did her best to follow him. She didn't have the deep grooves her shoes like he did with his combat boots. He got up and helped Sarah up and they surveyed the area around them.

It looked as if they were getting back into civilization. A few cars passed them and drove quickly up the street. Farther up the street they could see flashing lights of police cars and what looked like several people moving around them. They looked like they were going faster than the zombies would move and that was a good sign.

They started toward the activity.

5. Rumors

**Chapter 5- Rumors**

Nathan and Sarah cautiously walked up to the barricade of police cars and officers with shotguns. There was also a man that looked slightly like Sheffield in the fact that he was wearing gray pants and a black vest. He also had a tan t-shirt with a funny looking symbol on his right shoulder. It was a gold star with the letters R.P.D. above it.

"Who are you?" asked the blue uniformed officer.

"I'm corporal Nathan Sheffield, United States Marine Corps. This is Sarah-" he stopped realizing he didn't know Sarah's last name. Sheffield looked at her for help.

"Marshall. Sarah Marshall.

"A marine? What the hell are you doing here?" asked the one with the vest. Sheffield knew he had to ditch the subject.

"What are standing around here for?" he asked quickly. The officers seemed surprised at the abrupt subject change but went along with it anyway.

"We are here as a checkpoint. We're directing people to the evac sites. We could really use your help man." said the one with the vest.

"Are you S.W.A.T.?" asked Nathan.

"Uh, no. S.T.A.R.S. All the S.W.A.T. people are in Glensdale trying to stop the riots."

"S.T.A.R.S.?" asked Sheffield not understanding.

"Special Tactics and Rescue Service." answered Sarah for all of them. "They are the best." The S.T.A.R.S. officer smiled at her and then turned his attention back to Sheffield.

"Brandon Hazlett." he put out his hand to Sheffield who took it.

"A marine and a S.T.A.R.S. Interesting combination." said the

uniformed officer. He looked to be at least fifty, unlike his partner of whom looked about Sheffield's age. They all turned around and looked at a car that was coming up the street.

Brandon pushed past Sheffield and Sarah and put his hand up. The car slowed to a stop and he went around to the drivers side.

"Are you headed to Raven's Gate?" he asked.

"Yeah." said the muffled voice of the driver. "Is that a problem?"

"No, that's where I'm supposed to direct you. Do you have any wounded with you?"

"Yeah, my sister. She was bitten by one of those crazy people."

"Uh, their, uh, zombies..." said Sarah. Brandon and the driver looked at her.

"Zombies?" asked the driver sarcastically.

"Just, saying." she finished and turned red with embarrassment. The man turned back to Brandon as if to say something and suddenly screamed. A woman lunged from the back and sank her teeth into the driver.

Brandon's gun was up in the blink of an eye and he was aiming at the woman. The driver escaped and opened the car door. He threw himself to the ground and Brandon grabbed him and pulled him away from the car.

The woman tried to climb over the drivers seat and follow him out the door. Sheffield was on her in a second and snapped her neck.

"WHAT THE HELL!" screamed the man. "She was fine just a moment ago, only sick."

"Like the lady said, zombies." replied Sheffield. "Think about it, it makes sense." Sheffield turned to Brandon. "I hear Umbrella might be involved?"

"Might be? They already are. They are inspecting everyone at the Ravens Gate Bridge." said the older cop. "They've also got guys in the city, I don't know what they're doing though."

"Then they are responsible for this?"

"I don't know." he said. "I have also heard that there is something moving around the city. Some big ass monster armed to the teeth."

"Alright. This has all been very educational, but I think we should go." said the man Sheffield had just saved. They stopped talking and looked at him. He was pointing down the street. A large group of zombies was working its way around the corner. They had apparently followed Nathan and Sarah the mile from the McDonalds.

Brandon opened fire with his P90. The older officer ran from his place behind the car and got into the drivers seat of a large S.W.A.T

truck. The diesel engine echoed off the surrounding buildings.

"Get it dammit!" he yelled from the window. Brandon and the man darted around the cars and opened the back doors to the truck. Sheffield started shooting at the crowd and saw a couple of them fall. Sarah joined the other three in the truck and Nathan sat on the edge of the truck and fired a couple more shots at them as they got farther away.

Brandon picked up the radio and turned to the right channel.

"This S.T.A.R.S. officer Hazlett, checkpoint B has been overrun. Greenwich should now be sealed. Repeat, Greenwich is now overrun and should be sealed ASAP."

"Rodger that Hazlett. What is your position now?" asked the man on the radio.

"We're traveling north on 122nd street."

"Proceed to downtown Main Street and you will receive your new orders, over."

"Rodger that, I read you. Hazlett out." He clicked off the radio and hung it up.

"So, you never answered the question of why your here." said Brandon as they went over a bump.

"I just happened to be in the area." lied Sheffield.

"Fully geared and everything?"

"Yeah." Brandon looked at him strangely but left it at that.

"I'm sorry I had to do that to your sister in front of you." said Nathan suddenly to the man. He looked at him with a surprised look.

"You did what you had to. She was a gentle soul; she would never have hurt anyone. That wasn't Lucy." he said and leaned forward to put his hand out. "Phillip Young. I usually go by Phil." Sheffield took his hand.

"Nathan Sheffield." They shook hands. Brandon, Nathan, Sarah and Phil rode in silence for the next ten minutes until the truck came to a stop. The occupants got out and looked around to see why they had stopped.

A black SUV was upside down on the pavement and glass was strewn around it. The driver and the passenger looked to be dead inside it, their arms were resting on the roof. One of the back doors were open and there was evidence that someone had crawled from it.

Nathan looked around to see if anyone was in the vicinity, but only a couple of zombies were slowly making their way toward them. Brandon picked them off easily and he and Sheffield searched the area for the person that had made it out of the car.

A man came running out of an alley and slammed into Nathan. They both

fell to the ground and the man quickly got up. He was in a blue police uniform.

"Run! Run! Something is coming this way! Get out of here!" he said. Something wrapped around his leg and he looked down for a moment and looked up just as it pulled his leg back and tripped him. The creature started dragging him back into the alley. Sheffield grabbed his hand and tried to keep him from being dragged back.

Sheffield lost his grip and the man flew back and collided with a creature. It bit into him and tore his head off in one powerful jerk. Blood sprayed everywhere and the creature took another chunk from his bloody stump.

The creature looked up at Nathan. It had no eyes; it's head only a rounded oval. Its body was at least six feet long from its head to its clawed feet. The creature had powerful arms with six-inch claws on its hands. It's long tongue flailed around looking for something more to pull back into the deadly teeth.

It lunged at Sheffield and he moved aside just in time. It moved with incredible speed and agility. It grabbed the wall with its huge claws and jumped from side to side making its way up. It occurred to him that it would be a good idea to shoot.

He raised his gun and opened fire. Holo-point bullets tore at the brick wall, but nothing hit the creature. It moved too fast. It jumped from the top and Nathan ducked and rolled. He ended up doing in, once again, just in time to avoid it.

The creature landed on all four of its limbs and took a step toward Sheffield. He aimed and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened. His gun was dry and the damned thing knew it. It jumped at him and Sheffield, thinking quickly, dropped his MP5 and whipped out his Desert Eagle and fired. The huge slug blew its head apart in a slimy spray. The body hit the ground, slid, and stopped at Nathan's feet.

"What the hell was that!" yelled Brandon, looking from the headless body of the cop, to the creature.

"Something very bad." replied Sheffield. That creature had been worse than anything he had fought at Black Mesa. He didn't know what it was, but he aimed to find out.

Hallsworth and his team had been moving from street to street for over an hour now. They still hadn't found the crash site and he feared that they had got turned around. Trina had been pulling everybody's weight in killing the infected citizens.

He didn't like to think of them as 'zombies'. It made him uncomfortable to think about the fact that he really was in effect killing dead bodies. He didn't quite understand why, but it just made him feel like a monster that was mutilating bodies. So he preferred to think of them as crazy.

His team emerged from an alley and immediately stopped. They had finally found the crash site but down the street they got a glimpse of what looked like a police truck turn the corner. The black Chevy Suburban was turned over but it looked as if someone had recently been there. The bodies of the driver and his partner were lying on

the ground with a single bullet hole in their heads. Hallsworth guessed they had shot them to make sure they wouldn't get up again.

"Sir! Licker!" said Frenchie from an alley across the street. Hallsworth immediately ran over to Frenchie's position. Sure enough, it was a licker. That meant that they had gotten out of the Hive and started breeding.

He quickly grabbed his radio.

"This is captain Hallsworth, get me Major Cain RIGHT NOW." he said urgently. About thirty seconds passed and the familiar accent came on.

"What is it captain?"

"Sir, we've got big problems. The lickers have escaped and most likely started breeding." he said. Cain was quiet for a moment and when he responded he sounded worried.

"I am moving up to Code: Red. Find Ms. Ashford and get to the evac point. Cain out." Hallsworth knew that had really worried Cain. Lickers were hard to kill and if they managed to get out of the city, there was no stopping the T-virus. Not only that they carried a more aggressive strain of the virus. The anti-virus formula didn't affect the Licker version of the T-virus.

Hallsworth turned and faced the three-team members behind him. Jaques, Davis, and Sandler were looking at him, waiting for orders.

"Burn it." he said the Sandler and motioning to the body of the Licker. Sandler stepped forward and pulled an incineration grenade from his vest belt. He primed it and dropped it in between the Licker and the dead cop. They quickly moved out of the alley and heard the grenade explode. "Let's find the outpost." said Hallsworth. "We can use the truck there at find the girl."

The team started down the street and Hallworth took one last look at the flaming bodies. He knew their job would be much harder now that they had to worry about Lickers also. Hallsworth looked at his watch and noted that it was five-twenty PM. He hurried to join his team and knew they should at least find the outpost before it got dark.

6. Proof

****_Chapter 6- Proof_****

The group had abandoned the truck after they inadvertently ran over a spike strip. The old cop, which they had found out was named Ben, had not seen it and blew all four tires. Now they had to fight their way down the street to find the head quarters that the R.P.D. was using to bring people in from the hot sections of the city and get them to Raven's Gate Bridge.

According to Brandon, Umbrella was actually in charge of everything happening within the city. They were being extremely selective about who they would let out of the city.

The group had been walking now for about two hours and it was seven-thirty. They hadn't encountered very much trouble, a couple of zombies here and there, but Sheffield had explained that they were looking for fresh meat, so they would be where most of the living people were.

Phil had grown progressively worse and was now having to be carried by Brandon and Sheffield. He looked really sick and Nathan guessed it was what ever was causing the zombie's to return to life. He guessed that Phil would be dead within the hour.

Two zombies slinked out of a nearby bar and started coming toward them. Sheffield and Brandon gently set Phil down and aimed at the corpses. Sheffield fired into one zombies' head sending it to the ground. He regretted doing it because it looked like it had been a S.T.A.R.S. officer. Brandon shot the other one and they decided it was clear to move on.

He had managed to convince Ben, Brandon and Phil that the people trying to eat them were indeed zombies, although they had yet to see one of them actually come back from the dead.

Sheffield helped Phil back up and the two of them passed an electronics store with a shattered front window. There was one television still working and it was playing the same thing over and over again. It showed a woman, with a rather large dog, sitting in a chair. The narrator was talking about something called Regenerate. It was an anti ageing cream.

"Umbrella Corporation. Our business is life it's self." stated the announcer and the commercial started all over again. Phil chuckled and it made him cough.

"What?" asked Nathan as he helped him get a more secure grip on his shoulder.

"Nothing. That commercial seems so out of place right now. It's just funny." he said weakly. Sweat trickled down his forehead and Sheffield wiped it away with his glove. "I gotta stop for a second man." Sheffield stopped and again set him gently on the ground and propped him up on the flat tire of a car. "You got any water?" he asked. Sheffield smiled and reached back into his pack. He withdrew his canteen and opened it for the dying man. Phil took a sip and handed it back to Nathan.

"You keep it." he said.

"You don't want to get sick?" he asked. Sheffield laughed.

"No, but I also never use it. My vest has a backup water supply if I need it." he said. Phil tried to look at Nathan's PCV but couldn't seem to focus on it.

"That's a neat feature, what is it?"

"A Powered Combat Vest. It's the latest in armor technology. My unit was actually that first to try it out. Very expensive but useful piece of equipment."

"Why is it- so, expensive?" Sheffield could tell he was getting weaker.

"It's got a weird gel that absorbs shock a lot better than Kevlar. I could take a bullet straight on and not feel it." he said. "The gel also has a chemical make up that helps keep my body temperature down if I get overheated."

"That's- really- cool." he said, straining the words. There was a pause and he spoke again. "I'm... about- to die- aren't I?" he managed to say. Sheffield felt that he couldn't lie to him.

"I think so, yes." he replied in a low voice. Phil exhaled. His breath was getting raspy.

"Am I... going to... become... one of those- zombies? he asked. His eyes were getting heavy.

"I don't know."

"If... I do... prove to them... what you have... been saying. Call... them-" he was now struggling to give Sheffield his last wishes. Nathan looked up and called the others over. They had stopped when they saw Sheffield set Phil down. They started over.

"I'm sorry we couldn't have become friends." said Sheffield sincerely. Phil smiled.

"Do me... a favor..." he started. "Live... through... this." he said with his last breath. He slowly dropped his head until it was resting on his chest. These last words made Sheffield think of what Nelson had told him, Berkley, and Klive before he died.

"What is it Sheff?" asked Ben.

"He's dead. Now we wait." he said. Ben kneeled down and checked for a pulse and nodded to the others that he was indeed dead.

"Wait for what?" asked Brandon.

"He told me to stay and prove to you that he would reanimate."

"Oh, for god's sake Sheffield." started Ben. "There are no such things as-" Phil's eyes bolted open and he jerked his head toward Sheffield, given that he was the closest. Nathan merely grabbed the sides of his head and snapped his neck. He chose to do that other than shoot him so as to do less visible damage to Phil's body. "Zombies." finished Ben, wide eyed.

"Does that prove it to you?" he asked coldly and moved to lay Phil down flat on the ground.

"Yeah." replied Ben in a small voice. "Jesus, in all my years I never thought I'd see something like that." Sheffield closed Phil's eyes and got up.

"Let's go. And don't get bitten." said Nathan. He grabbed the bottom of his gun and resumed his trek down the street. The others followed him without a word. They knew he had somewhat bonded to Phil.

Sarah came up beside him. She was almost at a run to keep up.

"I'm sorry about Phil." she started.

"It wasn't your fault." he didn't even look at her and she knew it was his way of mourning, she guessed it was just part of his training. Sarah left it at that and slowed to a walk to let Nathan be alone.

"FREEZE!" said a loud and commanding voice from out of nowhere. "Don't try anything, put your guns on the ground!" Sheffield looked around instinctively. He didn't see anyone so he carefully kneeled down and placed his MP5 on the pavement. Seeing that the marine was doing this, Sarah put her hands up and Brandon followed the same procedure as Sheffield had done. Ben on the other hand, drew his pistol and aimed it around.

"Drop it!" hissed Brandon. Ben looked at him as if he were crazy but tossed his pistol to the ground. Three S.T.A.R.S. officers came out of a building to the right and kept their weapons aimed at the group.

"What are you doing here?" asked one of them. Brandon turned to face them.

"Fairfax?" he asked. The leading one lowered his gun.

"Hazlett? What the hell are you doing here?" he asked, signaling for the others to stand down.

"We were told to come to central command." he said bending down to pick up his gun.

"Well you found the right place. It's just around the corner, but I don't know for how long. The zombies are pushing our defenses back."

"You've seen them get back up?" asked Sheffield. The S.T.A.R.S. man looked at him in a funny way.

"Hell yeah. My partner was killed by one and he got up and started trying to eat me. It's not that hard to piece together. Don't tell me you didn't know..." he trailed off.

"No, I knew all right." replied Sheffield.

"You look like a soldier, what are you doing here?" asked one of the S.T.A.R.S. behind Fairfax. Nathan rolled his eyes. He was tired of everyone asking him that. He didn't mind explaining it to Sarah, even if she did think he was crazy. But he didn't need what was left of the city knowing about Black Mesa and his dead comrades.

"Corporal Nathan Sheffield. USMC Special Forces. That's all you need to know." he said.

"Did the government send you to watch Umbrella?"

"I said that was all you needed to know." he replied shortly. "I want you to take us to Ravens Gate Bridge."

"Alright, but I doubt Umbrella will let you pass. They have only let sixty people out so far. The doctors are taking blood and testing it and all that crap before they let you through that gate."

"Fine, just get us there." said Nathan irritably. "She doesn't need to see anymore death." He motioned to Sarah who rolled her eyes and shifted her weight to the other foot. Fairfax turned to the other S.T.A.R.S. member that hadn't spoken yet.

"Griffin, take the four of them to the station. Get them on a chopper to the bridge."

"Yes sir." he turned to the group. "Come on, there is a truck just over here." Sheffield turned back to Fairfax.

"You don't happen to know what's causing this do you?" he asked.

"Umbrella isn't telling us much. Only that it's some sort of virus and they need our help if they are going to contain it."

"A virus that brings people back from the dead?" asked Sheffield sarcastically. Fairfax chuckled softly and lit a cigarette.

"I guess. But I've never heard of a virus that does that."

"That's because there isn't one." said Sheffield. "It's either a bio-weapon or an experiment gone horribly wrong. Or both." Nathan knew this because he had dealt with this kind of thing before, being part of the Hazardous Environment Combat Unit he had seen his fair share of hazardous viruses and mutations. But never anything to this extent.

"Sheffield! Come on!" yelled Brandon from the back of the truck.

"Good luck getting out of the city." said Fairfax. Nathan nodded and rushed over to the truck. He climbed in and Griffin hit the gas.

"I'm not leaving the city Fairfax. So I'll probably see you again. Stay alive until I get back!" yelled Brandon as the truck drew further away. Fairfax tapped his head and did a half salute.

Hordes of infected citizens were limping and stumbling down the street toward Hallsworth and his team. They were doing all they could to hold out and wait for the chopper to come and retrieve them.

They had looked everywhere for Ashford's daughter and they couldn't find her anywhere. Trina had been bitten and was now getting progressively worse, but still killing as many infected as the rest of the team combined.

"Grenade!" yelled Sandler and tossed one into the crowd coming at them. It exploded sending bodies and body parts flying everywhere. The team fell back into a large building and Frenchie slammed the thick glass doors shut. He shoved his knife in the handle to keep them from getting in. A dozen or so of them hit the glass and bounced off. They kept throwing themselves into it and more of them crowded around the door.

"Get to the top." ordered Hallsworth. Trina, Sandler, and Frenchie went into the elevator and started up toward the top floor. Hallsworth, Davis, and Jaques kept their gun trained on the door incase any of the infected people came in. The elevator chimed signaling that the other three had reached the top.

Hallsworth backed up with Davis and they hit the button to bring the elevator back down. The infected citizens smashed through the glass and before Jaques could open fire, several of them jumped onto him. Davis and Hallsworth opened fire at the infected on Jaques but it was too late.

His screams had stopped and he lay there bleeding on the ground. The two men kept firing at the onslaught of infected people as more and more of them poured through the door. The elevator finally opened and they quickly backed into it. Davis' gun emptied and he hit the door close button.

The elevator doors closed just as a hand came through the opening making the door slide back open. Hallsworth fired what was left of his clip into the mans head. He drew his pistol and shot every infected citizen that tried to come at the door. Davis hit the button again and this time the doors closed, but not before they saw Jaques sit up and look around for food.

The elevator ascended to the top floor and stopped. The doors opened and the two Umbrella soldiers made their way down a short hall that led to a flight of stairs. They ascended them and came out into the setting sun.

"Where's Jaques?" asked Trina. Davis shook his head.

"Where's the chopper?" asked Hallsworth.

"It's on its way." replied Frenchie. "I told them to pick us up here, not on the street." Sure enough, they could hear the loud thudding coming toward them. The helicopter came to a hover over the building and descended down so they could climb on.

Once they were all on, the chopper ascended into the sky and flew over Raccoon City toward Umbrella's command site.

"What happened to Jaques?" asked Sandler.

"He got overwhelmed." replied Davis. They flew for about five minutes and the chopper finally landed in one of the squares of lights. The sun had gone down enough and they were starting to light the bright flood lights. It cast a red glow onto the city and command center. Get resupplied and ready to go again in case we need to go back." said Hallsworth. He was the first one out and sprinted across the grass and up the stairs to the gate. Major Cain was standing in his usual place supervising who was getting out of the city and who wasn't. Hallsworth got to the top and immediately saw that half the city was there.

People were packed on the bridge. They were squirming and moving for the length of it and then some. All of them reminded Hallsworth of ants building an anthill.

"Captain, I am going to need your men down there to help keep the citizens in check." said Cain to Hallsworth, not even turning around.

"Yes sir, am I going to be needed down there?"

"No, I want you up here with me." he said. "I am also calling Raymonds in here." Hallsworth cringed at the thought of working with Delton Raymonds.

Raymonds was a six-foot tall, burly black guy. Hallsworth on the other hand was a forty-five year old five-foot seven man. He wasn't nearly as big as Raymonds, so he didn't have as much intimidation, but the grunts under his command liked him a lot better because they knew he had worked for his position, unlike Raymonds.

Raymonds was trying to get Hallsworth's job simply by being a suck up. He had impressed the higher-ups by his willingness to do anything. Hallsworth knew the only reason he was still captain was because of his experience, and that was the same reason that Davis would succeed him. He would see to it that Raymonds never got command.

"Captain, I am also going to need you to tell Dr. Ashford that you couldn't find his daughter." Hallsworth dropped his head.

"Yes sir, I'll do it right now." he said and started down the stairs.

"Oh, and captain, I'm sorry about your member." said Cain referring to Jaques. Hallsworth nodded and finished going down the stairs. He really didn't care for Cain, but he liked him better than the other major Umbrella had to deal with things like this, his name was Kilgore, and Hallsworth wasn't sure anyone liked him.

He started across the lawn toward Dr. Ashford's tent really not looking forward to telling the good doctor his daughter was dead.

The sun was nearly gone. It had been an extremely long and violent day for Nathan. It looked as if it might finally be over. He was positive that they would let him and Sarah out when he showed them that he was a marine. They wouldn't dare mess with marine given that he worked for the government.

S.T.A.R.S. officer Griffin had driven them into a very secure area that was filled with cops and Umbrella guards. Sheffield had never seen an Umbrella guard before today, but he knew what they were because of the famous red and white octagon that was the Umbrella logo.

"This is your stop." He said. "The chopper should be leaving momentarily." Sheffield helped Sarah out, once again noting that she was quite small for her age. Once she was safely on the ground, he hopped out and joined her.

"We're finally going to get out of here." he said. She looked at him.

"You aren't going to leave me are you?" she asked.

"Well, legally your grandparents have to take you." "They were here too." she said.

"Then we have to find them." Brandon came up and interrupted their conversation.

"Are you sure you are going to leave? We could really use your help." he said to Sheffield.

"Yeah, I'm sure. I need to get back to my unit."

"Hazlett! Get your ass to Raven's Gate Bridge. Umbrella needs some help. The civvies are getting restless." said another S.T.A.R.S. officer as he ran by. Brandon turned back to Sheffield.

"Guess I'm coming with you." he said.

"Guess so."

"If you are headed to Raven's Gate, get on board. This will be the last chopper ride to the bridge!" yelled a man from the street.

"Let's go." said Brandon. He led Nathan and Sarah across the street to a large building. It had a huge area around it and several guards erecting plexi-glass walls to strengthen the defenses.

It had a circular shaped building, most of which was pretty tall. A ramp going up to a helicopter pad in the center of the circular structure was where they were headed. "This is City Hall." said Brandon as he led them through a glass door and down a hallway lined with glass on one side and a large indoor water pool on the other.

"Nice building. Where's the mayor?" asked Sheffield. Brandon shook his head.

"He disappeared after we told him we weren't going to be able to contain the infection or what ever it is." he replied.

"He just ran?"

"Either that or someone took him out." he said. "Of the city." he added. They kept walking up a ramp that led around the round building and up to the helipad that made up the roof of the center complex.

Just as they had said, a large black helicopter was starting up its blades, getting ready to take off. Sheffield signaled for Brandon and Sarah to get on and he took a final look around to make sure no one else needed to get on. He didn't see anyone and finally got in.

"Go!" he yelled over the roar of the blades. "No one else is coming." The pilot nodded and lifted the chopper off the roof of city hall just as the sun disappeared below the horizon and made the skies above Raccoon City dark.

7. Umbrella's Mistake

**Chapter 7- Umbrella's Mistake**

Sarah looked out of the window from her seat in the chopper. She could see bright flood lights in the distance. She guessed that was the bridge. She hoped they would let her and Nathan out of the city. She was tired and didn't want to be near dead people that were trying to eat her anymore.

The chopper started to slow down and she could feel it descending into the crowds below. She thought the pilot was going to land on them but then realized the people below it quickly spread out of the way and looked ready to pounce onto it. The two Umbrella guards inside saw this too and moved their guns into a more threatening position.

The helicopter touched down and Brandon hopped out. He offered Sarah his hand and he helped her out. Sheffield got out also and the chopper rose into the air again without incident. She grabbed Nathan's arm so she wouldn't get lost and he led her and Brandon through the huge crowd of people.

"Sarah?" All three of them looked around to see who had called her name. "Sarah!" A man came rushing through a small group of people.

"Daddy!" she cried. She let go of Nathan's arm and rushed to him.

"Oh my god. I was so worried." said Mr. Marshall nearly in tears. Sarah was hugging her father. Sheffield noted that she was begging very mature about this. She pulled slightly away.

"Not yet daddy." she said shaking her head slightly. She remembered that Brandon and Nathan were there. "This is Corporal Sheffield and Officer Hazlett." she said gesturing to each of them. "Nathan saved my life." she said. Mr. Marshall got up. Sheffield put his hand out.

"Corporal Nathan Sheffield." he said with a smile. Mr. Marshall took it.

"Thank you." he said sincerely. Nathan nodded.

"It's my job."

"You're with the Marine Corps?" Sheffield nodded. He was thoroughly confused by the fact that he was sure he shot her father when he was in her house. He dismissed it at the idea that it was her uncle or something.

"We need to get you two out. Now that she's found you, I should probably stay here and help these guys." he said, motioning to Brandon who was now making his way through the people.

"Sheffield!" he yelled.

"Come." he said turning around and starting toward Brandon's voice. The Marshall's followed him and it turned out to be a good choice.

Brandon had made his way to the front of the crowd.

The four of them could see a tall thick wall that cut them off from the exit to the bridge. Bright flood lights illuminated the area and lit every corner. There were several small tables and what looked like door frames, but they had bright lights inside them. Several people were sitting at the tables getting blood drawn.

"All citizens must pass through medical scan to proceed through the checkpoint." The PA system kept blaring the same message over and over again.

"BULL!" yelled a man next to Brandon. The man turned to the S.T.A.R.S. officer. "They aren't letting anyone through, and haven't been all day. They keep saying that only certain people pass the inspection and I didn't pass and I feel fine." he said angrily.

"Well, I'm sure they know what they are talking about."

"I doubt it. I think they just want to keep what ever is happening here a secret. They're responsible if you ask me." Brandon gave him a funny look.

"You keep thinking that." he said and moved forward. The man watched him and shook his head silently saying that the officer didn't know what he was talking about.

"Dipps!" he said as he went forward. "What the hell is going on?"

"The people are getting rowdy; Umbrella needs us to help them keep people back. We could use your help." he said. Brandon turned around and saw a tall black S.T.A.R.S. member out of the corner of his eye.

"Peyton!" The black guy turned around. His face lightened up.

"Hazlett, have you seen Valentine?"

"No, not since this afternoon when she blasted her way in." Peyton looked around.

Both of them heard a whistle and looked around.

"Peyton!" yelled a voice from the crowd. He looked around and spotted Jill Valentine.

"Valentine! Hey, Valentine!" he yelled back putting his arm up. She yelled something they couldn't hear and Peyton stepped forward. "Let her through!" he yelled at the citizens. "Glad your here, we could use your help. They heard a gurgling sound and all three of them turned around.

Sarah's dad fell to the ground and she bent down with a panicked look on her face. Sheffield had disappeared for the moment and was no where to be seen. Peyton rushed forward.

"He has a weak heart." she said in a frantic voice. Two more Umbrella

guards rushed forward to help Peyton.

"Get away from him!" yelled one of them. The other one turned toward the people and started pushing them away.

"Everybody stand back." he said. Brandon looked around to see what the men on the wall were doing and saw a tall man in a grey suit come to the edge to see what was going on. An even taller black man and a shorter but older looking man of him right and left wearing the black Umbrella armor.

One of the Umbrella men tried to grab Sarah and pull her away.

"Daddy!" she screamed and broke from his grip. What looked like a commanding Umbrella guard came forward.

"Get away from him! Get her away from him!" he barked at one of the guards. Peyton turned around and grabbed her around the waist. Valentine moved forward.

"It's okay." he said reassuringly. She seemed to take comfort in his tone and let him back her away from her father.

"Get her away!" yelled the commander at Peyton.

"It's okay, come on." he said trying to keep her calm. Many people noticed the commotion and were watching with interest. Sarah realized that he was allowing herself to be taken away and once again struggled to get free.

"Daddy!" she screamed again. Brandon knew that she had thought he was dead and he knew it would be horrible to lose him again.

"It's okay, I got you." said Peyton maintaining his grip. Several Umbrella guards rushed over to see what was going on. Mr. Marshall clenched his fists and arched his back. The men tried to steady him but it was too late. He relaxed and lay still of the ground.

Sarah watched with a whimper as she realized what had just happened. She stopped struggling and Peyton moved her away with more ease. She looked back just in time to see her father's eyes bolted open and him make a quick movement for Peyton's leg.

The cop screamed as he sank his teeth into his leg.

"Get him off! Get him off me!" he yelled at the other S.T.A.R.S. members around him.

"Move aside!" ordered another Umbrella guard to Brandon. Sarah screamed and Brandon grabbed her and pulled her away from Peyton and his assailant.

"Get back!" yelled Brandon at some people to make room for them to go. He spotted Sheffield behind several people trying to see what was going on and Sarah ran to him. Brandon looked back just in time to see Valentine draw her pistol and send a bullet through Mr. Marshall's head. He closed his eyes and made his way to Sheffield.

"I'm sorry Sarah." he said as he approached them. She had her head buried in his vest and she was sobbing uncontrollably. Nathan was gently stroking her head.

"That's it, just let it out. It's the best thing you can do." said Sheffield. He caught Brandon's eye. "No." he mouthed. A loud rumbling filled the night air and the two of them looked over to see the worst thing imaginable.

"Those bastards are gonna lock us in here." noted Brandon. The Umbrella guards rushed through it before it closed and pushed back the few citizens that got to the opening. Several people started yelling at the men on the wall. The tall man in the grey suit picked up something and clicked it on.

"This is a biohazard quarantine area. Due to risk of infection, you cannot be allowed to leave the city. All appropriate measures are being taken. The situation is under control, please return to your homes." he said into the microphone which was echoed over the PA system. The man had a thick German accent.

"Your not going to get away with this!" someone from the crowd yelled.

"You have five minutes to turn around and return to the city." he continued. The man turned to the burly black guy standing to his right and handed the microphone to him. A moment later the dark skinned man's deep voice echoed throughout the bridge.

"Use of live ammunition has been authorized." he said coldly as if he had never felt and emotion. "Five." he started counting down. The guards clicked the safety's off, readied their guns. "Four." the S.T.A.R.S. turned around and stared at the guards on the gate. They didn't know what to think. Umbrella had been helping them all day and now they were locking everyone in the city. "Three." Brandon turned around and realized they were actually going to start shooting.

"Get back!" he yelled. Peyton seemed to realize this also and his voice boomed over all the commotion.

"Get them back!" he ordered to the other S.T.A.R.S. They shouldered their guns and started turning people around and pushing them the other way. Brandon moved past Sheffield and began pushing people back.

"Two." Everything seemed to go into slow motion. Nathan kneeled down and put his arms around Sarah's waist. He lifted her up easily given the fact she was only five-foot two and ninety pounds. He turned around and followed Brandon away from the gate.

"One." The people started to finally listen to the S.T.A.R.S. and turn to run. The Umbrella guards opened up with their guns spraying bullets into the air.

"That drew the line for Nathan. Umbrella had closed the gate, and that was bad enough. The fact that he couldn't at least get Sarah out of the city, that was another story. It made Nathan seriously angry. Now, on top of that, they were threatening the citizens by shooting at them.

Umbrella had made a mistake, and he was going to make them pay.

8. Hallsworth's Redemption

a/n: Sorry for the long update. My laptop crapped out on me and I had to get it fixed to retrieve my files. I have them backed up now, but my laptop is still down and that is what I do most of my typing on. So it might be another while before the next chapter gets up. I hope your enjoying this story so far. See ya!

Adam

****_Chapter 8- Hallsworth's Redemption_****

Captain Derek Hallsworth was disgusted with what he had just witnessed. What Cain had just done was sentence three-fourths of the city to death. What was worse, he knew it and he did it anyway.

Hallsworth wondered how Cain slept at night. That little girl who just lost her father was sent back into the city. He felt as if he wanted to throw up at just that thought. All the children that would never live a full life, never be able to go to college or start families of their own.

For all anyone knew, they could become the next great president or Martin Luther King. But Cain didn't care. All he cared about was keeping the infection contained and if that meant killing everyone in the city, then so be it. That made Hallsworth sick.

Even if he didn't show it, Hallsworth was had a very high sense of honor. He was a soldier, not a murderer. No matter what anyone said about him, he knew that he would never let anything happen to a child or innocent. What Cain had just done, and thus Umbrella, was murder an entire city, and there was no way around that.

Hallsworth was so caught up in his thoughts that he didn't hear Trina come up behind him. She nearly made him fall down the stairs from his surprise by her presence.

"Sorry sir." she said. "I need to talk to you. And so does Dr. Ashford." she said. Hallsworth steadied his breathing before answering.

"Yeah, what do you need?" he said. She looked around, put her arm on his shoulder, and turned him slightly so that Raymonds couldn't hear what they were saying.

"Sir, Dr. Ashford got a trace on his daughter. He wants to see you so he can ask you if you'll go and get her. I thought I'd ask you first." Hallsworth thought for a minute.

"I can't put all of you-"

"I've already spoken to everyone and they want to do this. They agree that it's the least we can do for him." she said. Hallsworth debated what to do for a moment and finally decided that Trina was right.

"Alright, everyone is still prepped?" She nodded her head. Hallsworth shook his head and knew this was a bad idea. "Okay," he said almost tiredly. "Let's go see Dr. Ashford." Trina smiled almost girlishly and grabbed his arm. She led him down the stairs and across the lawn to the tent where Dr. Ashford was.

"Come in captain." said Ashford somehow knowing they were there. Trina unzipped the curtain and Hallsworth entered. "If you would wait outside Ms. Centair." he said politely. Trina bowed her head and exited the tent zipping it up behind her.

Dr. Ashford turned his gaze to Hallsworth. Ashford had somewhat babyish features and small round glasses. He spoke with a slight British accent.

"I am told you would like me to go into the city once again and find your daughter." started Hallsworth before Ashford could say anything.

"Yes, but this time it will be easier. I know where she is." he said. "All I need is to know if you are willing to go in."

"Yeah, I talked it over with Trina and she said everyone was willing. But I would like to know how you plan to get us in. Cain isn't letting anyone in or out of the city." he said.

"No, he's still sending in teams. I don't know what he's doing but he's looking for something." said Ashford inquisitively.

"I'll do it Dr. Ashford, but it's up to you to figure out how to get us out." he said. With that he turned and unzipped the tent.

"Captain," Hallsworth stopped. "I'll have a ride for you and thank you." Hallsworth left the tent and was immediately approached by the same woman that had before they went into the city the first time.

"Sorry to bother you sir but Major Cain wanted me to tell you he is sending you back into the city. Olivera's team went missing and he wants you to locate them." she stated. "Your team is already prepped and ready to go, and I have the chopper waiting for you."

"Thank you. Is there anything else?" he asked.

"No sir." Hallsworth nodded and walked past her. He could hear the chopper starting up and started walking toward it. He unsoldered his gun and made sure it was loaded. He checked his vest pockets and made sure he had enough extra ammunition magazines left.

Ssndler saw him approaching the helicopter and met him half way.

"Sir, I just want to say that if we don't make it out of here, it was an honor finally working with you." he said. Hallsworth stopped what he was doing and put his hand on Sandler's shoulder.

"Thank you, and also to you." he said. They continued walking to the chopper. As they got into the cabin of the aircraft, the whole team looked at Hallsworth. He looked back and knew everyone was there

except Jaques.

They were all geared up and their black armor blended a lot better in with the dark.

"I want you all to know that the chances of us getting a ride out are zero to none. Even if they are sending us, there are a lot more infected citizens now. Chances are we won't come back alive." he stated bluntly. "I want this to be completely voluntary, so if you don't want to go on this mission, leave now and no one will think the worse of you." he said. No one moved an inch and the only sound was the blades thudding above them. He waited a moment for some one to get up and leave, but no one did. He nodded his head. "Okay, let's go!" he yelled to the pilot.

Hallsworth sat down and felt the helicopter leave the ground. Hallsworth pondered weather risking the lives of six people was worth saving one girl. He quickly shook his head of the thought and scolded himself for thinking of such a thing. He reminded himself of the fact that she was a little girl. He couldn't let her die. Not only that, but he felt that saving one was better than not saving any of the children in the city.

It wasn't long before he spotted the tall skyscrapers of downtown. He took in the beauty of all the lights from the buildings and knew it would most likely be the last time he would see it.

9. To Be A Marine

****_Chapter 9- To Be A Marine_****

Nathan, Brandon, and Sarah now knew that Umbrella was directly responsible for what was happening. They had locked everyone in the city and even shot at them to make them return to what was quickly becoming the city of the dead.

Sheffield couldn't understand why they would do such a horrible thing. He had worked for some very cruel people, having orders to kill American citizens that had nothing to do with the project that had gone wrong and made the aliens teleport into Black Mesa.

But even so, that didn't compare to sentencing a whole city to their deaths to keep something secret. That was the only conclusion that he could draw. That what ever was making the citizens of the city get up after they were dead was a bio-weapon, and it was extremely valuable to the Umbrella Corporation.

"Stupid. I should have known they would do something like this." muttered Brandon. "What the hell are they thinking? They can't cover up the destruction of an entire city." He said it more to himself than to Sheffield or Sarah. Nathan answered none the less.

"They probably have a cover up of some sort. That's how these things work."

"What kind of cover up could they possibly have that could explain the sudden disappearance of all the people of a city?"

"I don't know."

Sheffield was trying to think of what kind of power Umbrella would need to silence the city and stop the zombies.

He had been trained to deal with something like this, but he had always been on the other side of it. The side the orchestrated the cover-up.

Now he knew what it was like for the people at Black Mesa. He wished he could see Mathew's face in a situation like this, where _he _was the one running for his life.

"You okay?" asked Sarah. Her soft voice sliced through his thoughts like a knife.

He smiled at her.

"Yeah, I'm fine." he said. A single gunshot echoed from Brandon's P90 and a zombie fell to the ground.

"That was my last shot." He said, pulling the magazine out and looking into it. He sighed.

Sheffield un-holstered his Desert Eagle and handed it to him.

"Use it wisely, I only have two clips plus what's in there." he said. Brandon took it.

"Thanks." Nathan nodded.

A jet black helicopter thudded loudly overhead and turned to the right. It circled around and Sheffield recognized it as an attack chopper.

It turned around and Nathan barely had time to throw himself at Sarah and knock her out of the way before the large machine guns on the sides opened up.

Tracers tore into the pavement where the two of them had just been standing, and up into the building behind. Brandon also realized what was happening in time and dove out of the way.

Sheffield jumped to his feet and, with one hand, half dragged, half carried Sarah onto the sidewalk.

He spotted a glass door in front of them and fired into it. The door shattered and the two bolted into the store. His gun slammed into the door frame as he followed Sarah in.

The chopper circled around and fired at Brandon as he sprinted across the street to a doorway directly across from where Sarah and Nathan hiding.

The helicopter stopped firing as it flew over the building. It once again started to circle around, but Sheffield and Sarah were already hiding in the store. Brandon smashed the door behind him and disappeared.

"Black One may have something. Report."

"Black One here, I just spotted two, possibly three targets in the LZ over."

"Black One, you are cleared to take the targets out."

"Roger, stand by."

Hallsworth listened intently to the conversation over his radio.

He was in a chopper that was going to take him and his team to City Hall with Raymonds' team. They were to secure City Hall so it could be used as a landing site for the cargo chopper that would transport Nemesis, and if they could find her, Alice, out of the city before morning. That meant that all the R.P.D. that were in City Hall would have to be "disposed of" as Cain had put it.

Hallsworth didn't care about them. His plan was to slip away in all the chaos of the gun battle, steal one of the transport jeeps Umbrella had dropped there, and go to the girls' school.

As far as he could tell, it was a fool proof plan.

"Are the targets eliminated Black One?"

"Negative." They moved into the surrounding buildings. They weren't infected, over."

"Roger, send Team Three down to take them out. As of now, all citizens of Raccoon City, infected or not, are enemies. Consider them hostile." There was a pause and then the pilot responded.

"Roger that."

Hallsworth knew he would be glad when this was all over.

Bandon had lost sight of Sheffield and he knew that was a bad thing. He watched six black figures land on the street and un-hook their zip lines.

Three of them started toward the other side of the street while the other three started to move toward him.

They stopped just short of the door and turned to see several zombies smash out of a near by store and start limping toward them. The chopper disappeared and the troops opened fire. Brandon took advantage of the distraction.

Nathan motioned for Sarah to stay put and he crept around a shelf. He saw the men on the other side of the street turn around and start shooting at several limping figures.

Three more, louder, gunshots pierced the night and the three troops dropped to the ground. Two of the troops started quickly toward the door.

Sheffield leveled his gun. "It's them or you." Echoed through his head over and over. He pulled the trigger and nothing happened, only a loud click.

The Umbrella soldier turned around and saw him. Sheffield lunged at

him and caught his arm and forced it up. He squeezed off a shot catching the others' attention.

Sheffield swung around and kicked him in the back, just as the others opened fire. The bullets tore into him but didn't stop him from hitting the guards. The collision disoriented them and gave Sheffield time to pull his knife out and move toward them.

He landed a kick in one of the guards' faces, shattering the visor on his helmet, sending him spinning to the ground. Sheffield turned and landed the large knife right in the second ones chest. The guard grunted and Sheffield pulled it out, turned and threw it at the first guard. He was just about to grab his gun when the knife landed in his throat. Blood spurted out and he made a gurgling sound as he went down.

He looked around at what he had just done. Glass and blood was everywhere. The three bodies of the guards were on the ground lifeless. He walked over and retrieved his knife.

Brandon appeared in the doorway, sweeping a machine gun he had stolen from the dead guards, around.

"Get some ammunition and supplies." said Sheffield as he re-sheathed his knife and picked up his MP5, noting that the safety was on. He guessed that it was knocked that way when he hit the doorframe coming in.

Nathan regretted what he had done, but he now realized, for the first time, that he was a soldier, a Marine, an elite killing machine. For some reason they hadn't got that into him at Basic. Now he was finally realizing it, and he could accept it. Killing people was his job, and now his duty, weather he liked it or not.

Umbrella wanted them dead. They wanted everybody dead and it was his job to save Sarah, and even Brandon's life by killing the enemies,

10. Broken Trust

**Chapter 10- Broken Trust**

Hallsworth could feel the chopper descending onto the landing pad on top of the center building of City Hall. He looked out the window to see several S.T.A.R.S. officers run out onto the pad.

The chopper touched down and Raymonds jumped out followed by his team.

"Hey? Why did you close the gate?" asked one of them. Raymonds leveled his gun and coldly put a bullet in the cops' head. The other S.T.A.R.S. tried to raise their guns but the Umbrella guards were faster. In seconds the S.T.A.R.S. were laying on the ground in a pool of blood.

Two of Raymonds' men quickly moved across the pad and secured the stairs leading up.

"This is Raymonds." He said into his radio while Hallsworth and his

team climbed out of the chopper. "LZ clear, ready for reinforcements and supplies."

"Roger commander, Reinforcements en route. ETA, six minutes." The helicopter they had been on started to rise off the landing pad of City Hall and into the air. Hallsworth looked at the two towering building that molded around the central platform where the chopper pad was. Light flashed in many windows signaling that the gun battle inside the building had started.

Three Uniformed officers appeared at the top of the stairs and Raymonds' men opened fire. Their bullet riddled bodies fell backward off the stairs and landed on the concrete of the floor below them.

Everyone could hear shouting from below, and Hallsworth knew that the R.P.D. below had seen the bodies fall and were going to come up and figure out what was going on.

"Come on! Up the stairs!" yelled one of them. The guard from Raymonds' team at the top of the stairs shot the first one.

Hallsworth knew there wouldn't be a lot of time before they brought in the plexi-glass walls and sealed off the building completely. It would keep the infected citizens out, at least for a while and even the Lickers if they decided to come around.

He decided he would wait for reinforcements to come and then he would lead his team through the fighting and steal the jeep so they could get to the girls' school.

Officer Bryan Fairfax dove behind a desk just in time to keep from getting turned into Swiss cheese by the Umbrella guards.

He had no idea what was happening. One moment he was talking to Griffin, and the next he was lying on the ground with a bullet through his head.

After getting back from his security checkpoint in the city, he was looking forward to some rest and safety. Now the Umbrella guys were killing everyone in the building. All he knew was that he had to survive.

One of the guards came around the corner and Fairfax fired a single shot into his head. The guard flew off his feet and landed on his back. He turned the corner with his gun leveled and fired two shots into the guard down the hall. He fell back and slumped against the door.

Fairfax cautiously moved down the hall and stopped just short of a door that led into one of the Councilmen's office. The door crashed open and a S.T.A.R.S. officer backed out firing his gun into the room. He had almost made it out and around the door when several bullets tore through his chest and head. He dropped down and Fairfax unhooked a grenade from his belt. He pulled the pin, counted to five and tossed it in the room.

He heard an Umbrella guard scream something and the grenade detonated. Fairfax waited a moment and then slipped around the door

and into the room. His gun was level and constantly moving around looking for movement. The room was dark and the light overhead flickered. The only light came from a small fire in the corner and the window of the door that was across the room.

The grenade explosion had turned over a heavy oak desk. Blood was all over the wall, but there was no sign of the guard. Fairfax figured he must have landed it right next to the guy.

What was left of the second guard was all over the wall and he did his best to avoid it as he moved toward the other door. He quietly opened the door and looked out. He was right next to the main staircase that led into the main lobby. He knew that was the only way he was going to get out.

He also knew that Umbrella would have stationed guards in the lobby to keep people from getting out.

Fairfax looked out of the door and once he was sure it was clear, he moved across the walkway to the railing of the stairs. He looked down and saw that it curled three times before the bottom. That meant he was on the third floor.

He walked around and started slowly down the stair case. Once he got to the beginning of the first floor, he stopped and moved to where he could see the lobby, but no one in the lobby could see him.

Tables and couches were turned over along with boxes and a few small sandbag walls. Umbrella guards were kneeled behind their cleverly placed cover with their machine guns trained on the area in front of them, where Fairfax would end up once he was off the stairs.

He looked around for something to hide behind when he got off the stairs. He spotted the heavy marble reception desk, but he would lose ground if he went for that.

Fairfax looked over the stairs and realized if he could jump, then he would end up on the right of most of the guards. Then he could make a run for the door.

He took a deep breath and jumped over the railing, landing on the ground painfully, but unharmed. He scrambled to his feet and sprinted toward the front door passing the last two guards.

They turned to fire. Bullets flew past his head and shattered the glass door in front of him making it easier to get out. One of the bullets tore painfully into his arm but he kept going. He cleared the door and turned to get out of the line of fire. He turned the corner only to see several Umbrella guards getting into a jeep. He froze. One of them looked at him and waved her arm in their direction.

"Come on!" she yelled. "Hurry!" Fairfax seemed to be going on autopilot because his legs seemed to be moving him toward the jeep without his will.

Two other guards put their guns up and fired a single shot each into the chests of two guards that had come around the corner to chase Fairfax. The guards hit the ground and Fairfax jumped toward the jeep.

He landed on the edge with his feet hanging off and the woman reached down and grabbed him.

"Go!" yelled the passenger. The driver stepped on the gas and the jeep took off like a rocket away from City Hall just as several more guards ran out the door.

The woman pulled him in and sat him against the back of the drivers' seat. She spotted his bloody arm.

"Hold still, let me wrap that for you." she said and reached over for a First Aid kit.

"Why are you helping me?" asked Fairfax. She smiled.

"Why not? Would you rather we left you back there for the guards?" she asked sweetly. Fairfax knew she had a point. He winced as she pulled his sleeve up, ripped open a small packet, and poured its white powder condense onto his wound.

"Captain, we're in the green. They think we are some escaped S.T.A.R.S." said one of the men who was sitting across from the woman, to the guy in the passenger seat. He'd been listening to the radio.

"I'm Trina." She said. "What's your name?" Fairfax was startled by her friendliness but answered anyway.

"Bryan. Bryan Fairfax." He replied.

"This is Davis." She said, gesturing to the one who was listening to the radio.

"Sup?" he asked taking the earpiece out of his ear.

"This is captain Hallsworth." She said, pointing to the one in the passenger seat. "We call him Halls or cap." She added. The captain merely ignored them. "Hold on, this will hurt a bit." She said suddenly as she pulled the first layer of gauze tightly around his arm. Fairfax grunted.

"I'm Price." Said the driver. "And this guy here is Sandler. He doesn't have very good manners." He said jokingly. Sandler was sitting in the back of the jeep looking behind them with his feet over the edge. He turned around and shook Fairfax's hand.

"I actually have the best manners out of all of us, 'cept maybe Trina here." He said with a smile.

Sheffield looked at his watch. It was 1:30 in the morning. He sighed and rested his on the wall he was leaning against.

Sarah was resting her head on his shoulder. He didn't think it looked very comfortable, because his vest was big, bulky, and hard. He didn't think it looked real comfortable to be sleeping on, but she seemed to be sound asleep.

Brandon was sitting in a chair where he could see out of the Coffee shop they were in. A gun from the Umbrella guards they had killed

rested on his lap.

Nathan was also happy to have his Desert Eagle safely back in his holster. He didn't feel as safe if he didn't have a reliable weapon to fall back on incase his MP5 malfunctioned again like it had earlier.

Zombies occasionally drifted by the coffee shop, not noticing them. Sheffield knew he should be sleeping. He could really use it and Brandon had volunteered to watch for trouble, but Nathan couldn't get to sleep. His mind was racing about everything he had experienced in one day. Hostile aliens, losing friends, zombies, a murdering corporation, the day had been nothing but violence for him. He didn't know how long it would last, but he wanted it to end.

He reached into one of his vest pockets and pulled out his PDA. He flipped it open and checked the mission status.

He scrolled through the reports of where Freeman was. The last report was that he was near the missile silo. Things weren't going well for the Marines at all. Casualties were being racked up at an appalling rate. A new kind of alien was also being reported. Command had dubbed it "Race X" and apparently they had some sort of laser weapon. Luckily they were few and far between, but the emergence of a new race of alien was not the best thing in the world.

Nathan slowly moved his arm up around Sarah so he could pull out the small pointer. Once he had it, he went to the casualty screen and typed in PFC Mac Berkley. It took a moment for it to search through the MIA's and KIA's, but it found him. He was still alive and somewhere near the "Lambda Complex".

Sheffield had heard about the Lambda Complex. Before he was killed, his sergeant explained that taking the Lambda Complex was the main objective for the mission. Apparently it was a top secret project that had been going on at Black Mesa for years.

It was a giant machine that was specially made and nearly perfected for teleportation. Command had wanted to get it so they could stop the alien invasion and destroy all traces of it.

Sarah shifted positions and moved her head to rest it in the corner, freeing Sheffield so he could get up without disturbing her. He got to his feet and went over to where Brandon was sitting. He was sipping a cup of coffee and looked up as Nathan approached.

"I can take over for you if you want." He said.

"No, I'm fine." replied Brandon offering the cup to Sheffield. He shook his head. "How come you're here, in Raccoon City?" asked Brandon. Sheffield looked at him.

"An accident." He replied.

"You told Sarah."

"How do you know?"

"I just do."

"Okay, I'll tell you what, if he survive this whole thing, I'll tell you the whole story." Brandon thought for a moment, and nodded his head.

"That sounds fair."

Just as he finished the sentence, the window to the far right of them shattered and several zombies came limping in. Sarah awoke and scampered toward the two men. They opened fire at the enemies and took them down. Brandon grabbed Sarah and pulled her out of the shop as Sheffield covered them from the more zombies making their way into the building. Brandon also opened fire at the ones out in the street, but there were too many of them.

Nathan stopped shooting and ran out onto the street. Hundreds of zombies were slowly making their way down the street like a flood.

"Go!" yelled Sheffield. Brandon and Sarah took off down the street while Sheffield reloaded his gun and shot the closest ones before turning and following them. They had just rounded the corner to see a jeep moving at high speed toward them. Brandon pushed Sarah onto the sidewalk and leveled his gun. Sheffield caught up and stood next to him as the jeep slowed and stopped.

"You guys look like you could use some help." said the driver, poking his head out from behind the windshield. "Need a ride?"

"There are hundreds of zombies coming at us, of course we need a damn ride!" said Brandon lowering his gun and moving closer to the jeep. Sheffield helped Sarah up and led her to the car.

A zombie rounded the corner only to be met by a bullet from one of the people in the jeep. Nathan looked up and saw that one of the passengers was standing up in the back.

Sheffield leveled his gun instantly, seeing that his armor was that of the Umbrella guards. The guard looked at him but didn't move; however two more stood up and aimed at him and Brandon.

"We're not here to kill you." said the one on the passenger seat. Several more zombies started around the corner. He got out and stood there with his hands up. "Please get in the car and I'll explain. Sheffield sensed a zombie behind him. He quickly spun and landed the butt of his gun on its head. Its skull caved in and the newly dead body fell to the ground.

He turned and led Sarah to the jeep knowing that if they had wanted to kill them, they would have done it already. Brandon climbed up and helped Sarah in as well. Sheffield passed an Umbrella guard that was sitting on the edge and he did the same trying to save as much room as possible.

Three more gunshots rang out from one of the three that were standing. The passenger got back in and the driver hit the gas. They passed the street seeing the large number of zombies that were about to turn the corner to come and get them.

Chapter 11- Consequence of Incompetence

Fairfax reached over and tapped Brandon on the shoulder. He turned and saw him.

"Fairfax!" he said moving more to see him. "What the hell are you doing here?"

"These guys saved me." He said. "And she even wrapped my arm." The one in the passenger seat turned around and looked at Sheffield.

"So you're the rumored Marine." He said to Nathan.

"Yeah, and who are you." asked Sheffield curtly.

"Captain Derek Hallsworth." he said trying to move his hand around the many people in the jeep. Sheffield didn't even bother to take his hand. Hallsworth held his hand there for a moment and then withdrew it. He then went about introducing the rest of the Umbrella guards to him, Brandon, and Sarah.

"I'm the head for all the security operations for the United States." He added.

Sheffield actually bothered to turn around when he heard this.

"Then maybe I should kill you. After all you did sentence this city to death." Hallsworth took the comment like a physical blow.

"No, that was Major Cain." He said. "I had nothing to do with it."

"Why should I believe you?"

"Because I just saved your ass." He paused for a moment and continued. "Look, I know what Cain has ordered my men to do. That's part of the reason we're out here. We actually killed two of them in our escape from City Hall. Now they think we're escaped S.T.A.R.S. and are looking for us. We're in just as much danger as you." He said. Sheffield wasn't convinced. He thought they were going to try and gain their trust and then stab them in the back later. "Okay, if you help us, then we will find a way to get you out of the city before they destroy it. How does that sound?"

"Destroy it?" asked Sheffield urgently. "With what!" Hallsworth looked at him as if he were stupid.

"A precision tactical nuclear device, five kilo's."

"Holy god." muttered Sheffield.

"Now do I have your attention?" asked Hallsworth as if he had just won a prize. Nathan sighed.

"What are you going to need help with." He asked quietly. He knew he didn't have any other choice but to accept Hallsworth's offer.

"A company executive's daughter was lost during the evacuation this morning, he says she's hiding in her school and he wants us to

retrieve her."

"What evacuation?" asked Brandon. "There was no evacuation this morning."

"Yes there was. We got the important Umbrella employee's out of the city." he replied.

"Youâ€¦" he started. "You would get your own people out of here and leave the rest to die?" he asked angrily.

"I already told you, none of this was my decision on how to run this whole damn op. I just got called to be here to command the field operations." retorted Hallsworth.

"Shut up Brandon." said Sheffield. He was trying to think and he didn't need Brandon smarting off to the guy that was supposedly going to save their lives.

Sarah, who had been quiet, finally spoke.

"What does five kilo's mean?" she asked in a small voice. Trina answered her.

"Five kilo's means five kilotons. It's just powerful enough to vaporize this city but not do much damage to the area surrounding it."

"But, why would they nuke the city?" she asked.

"To wipe out all traces of what ever is causing the people to come back to life." answered Sheffield.

"It's called the T-Virus." said Hallsworth. "It was developed by Dr. Charles Ashford. He's the one whose daughter we are going to retrieve."

"Why would he make something like that?" asked Sarah.

"The story is that he made it for his daughter. You see, Dr. Ashford has a rare disease that causes the cells in his spinal column to die. It rendered him incapable of walking. When his daughter was born, she was diagnosed with the same thing. So he created the T-Virus to help her. It works by reanimating dead cells. She was given controlled doses of it and they actually helped her back, so she can walk again. But, if it is not controlled by the anti-virus, it can spread and kill the person infected with it. Then, as the cells die off, it reanimates them and brings the infected back to life." stated Hallsworth.

"Then how did it spread so fast and how did it actually get into the city?"

"Well, there is, more like was, a high-tech lab owned by Umbrella beneath the city called the Hive. We still don't know exactly what happened, but yesterday morning, the Hive's central intelligence computer, Red Queen, went homicidal and killed everyone. We speculate that the T-Virus somehow escaped and Red Queen was taking appropriate measures to contain it. That should have been the end of it there. The lab should have remained sealed for six months and then we would

reopen it for body collection."

"Why six months?" asked Brandon, now very interested in the story.

"That's the maximum safe period for all strains of the T-Virus to die and the infected employees to starve to death. It usually takes about four months for them to starve but we added the extra two just to be safe. Well, Cain, being the dipshit he is, reopened the Hive to 'find out what happened'. I told him we should just wait, lest something like this happens." he said waving his arms around motioning to the zombies that were trying to follow them. "He opened it and I lost one of my best teams trying to defend the entrance until we could close it again. You can guess the rest." He said tartly.

"So what you're saying is that Umbrella is run by incompetent morons." said Sheffield. He put his hand forward. "Corporal Nathan Sheffield, United States Marine Corps." Hallsworth took his hand.

"What you see here my friend, is the consequence of incompetence."

12. Seperation

**Chapter 12- Separation**

****Sarah listened to the horrific story that Hallsworth was telling. The more she heard, the more she wanted to know about why Umbrella had been so careless if they knew something like this would happen.

However, from what it sounded like, it was this Major Cain that had been the one that was careless. Not Umbrella. She didn't totally release the corporation from fault though. They were still going to blow up the city, and she was sure that someone like Major Cain wouldn't have enough command to authorize that kind of action.

Sarah also wondered how they were going to get out of the city before dawn. There was no helicopter that could take them, no car they could use to get out because of the wall they had somehow built around the city in a day, and no way could they get far enough away by walking.

It was this that made her wonder if Hallsworth was trying to gain their trust. Nathan, however, seemed to trust him and he had much more training than she did. She knew that there would be no point in disbelieving him if Sheffield knew what he was doing.

The woman Umbrella guard, Trina, moved closer to her.

"What did you say your name was?" she asked.

"Sarah."

"Hi Sarah, I'm Trina. Nice to meet you." she said kindly.

"How come this is happening?" asked Sarah. Trina thought for a moment about how best to answer.

"Well, one thing I have known since I began working for them is that they aren't very smart. They have to best minds in the world under them," she paused. "Well, not anymore. All of 'em died in the Hive," she paused again. "But they don't learn from their mistakes." She finished.

"And this is the result?" asked Sarah. Trina nodded.

"Just what Hallsworth said; this is the consequence of incompetence." Sarah looked at the moving pavement under her feet and thought about her family and how they would still be alive if Umbrella had been a little smarter. "Have I seen you before?" asked Trina randomly. Sarah looked up.

"I don't think so." She replied.

"Yes, yes I have. You were the girl at the gate!" she said. "I'm sorry about your father." Sarah was utterly confused. She didn't remember seeing anyone like Trina at the gate. "I was up on the wall." She said.

Sarah forced a smile.

"It's okay." She said.

The jeep suddenly swerved and threw Sandler, Davis and Sheffield onto the pavement. Price struggled to keep the jeep under control but he failed and the vehicle tipped onto its side tossing everyone out except Hallsworth and him.

The car rolled over onto its top and slid another couple of feet. The two guards shook their heads realizing they were upside down and that their heads had nearly been taken off. The frame of the jeep was just high enough to keep their heads from touching the ground. They unbuckled themselves and crawled out of the jeep.

Sheffield painfully got up and conquered the dizziness that followed. He wasn't hurt; he had been in worse crashes. Sandler and Davis also got up unharmed.

Trina wasn't as lucky. She had grabbed Sarah when the car tipped over and landed hardly on her side. Sarah was fine, but it looked as if Trina had cracked a rib or two. She was sitting on the pavement grimacing and holding her side. Price and Hallsworth emerged from the overturned car and rushed to Trina's aid.

Hallsworth put his hand on her rib and gently felt along the length of it until she grunted.

"Yeah, it's cracked. You may have more than one." He said. "I can give you some morphine."

"No. No." she said. "The last thing I need is to be high in a situation like this."

"It'll be hard to walk."

"I'll live." Sheffield knelt down next to her and took off his huge backpack. He searched around in it and found what he was looking

for.

"Before we left this morning, they gave us these. It's a new kind of field kit." He said taking long dark blue piece of nylon out. "It's designed for something exactly like this. What you do is wrap it around your wound, weather it be a broken bone, a gash, a bullet hole, whatever, you wrap it around and then connect this to it." He said showing them what looked like a blood pressure pump. "Then you blow it up and release it until it is tight enough to stop the bleeding or brace the bone. Then, there is a special gel in there that reacts to the extra body heat from the injury and makes the oxygen inside cold, so not only does it numb it, but only in one place. That way your still fit for action." He said reaching over to undo the straps on her armor.

"Where the hell do you get this stuff?" asked Bandon amazed.

"I'm a Marine. We get all the fun toys. Not only that my unit usually gets to try them out first." He pulled her armor off and had her lift up her shirt just to the top of her stomach. He gently wrapped the nylon bandage around her ribs and attached to its proper place. He then inserted the pump into the small hole. "This is going to hurt quite a bit so brace your self. She nodded and took a breath.

Sheffield started squeezing the pump and she whimpered. Once he knew it was tight enough, he pulled the pump out and released just enough pressure so she could breathe almost normally.

"Wow, I can already feel it working." She said.

"Don't let it fool you. It is designed to keep the soldier fit for combat, but not so they can keep fighting endlessly. It's to keep them combat ready until they can get it treated. Obviously we can't do that right now, so you have to take it easy."

Trina nodded.

"What was that?" asked Price turning around and aiming his gun.

"What was what?" asked Hallsworth, helping Trina to her feet. Something moved in the dark alley to their left and Price fired out of reflex. It moved from the shadows and lunged at him.

Sheffield recognized it as the same creature he had killed earlier. Price moved aside and the monster missed him by inches. The rest of the Umbrella guards opened fire and tore the creature to bits.

"Licker." said Hallsworth. Several zombies limped out of the building around the group, attracted to the gunfire. Nathan fired a shot and caught one in the forehead. The rest of the group opened up at the zombies and took them down.

Sheffield moved himself toward Sarah. She was standing with her pistol held tightly in her hands pointing straight ahead. Sheffield looked in the direction she was. A shiver ran up his spine at what he saw.

A huge lumbering shadow was walking down the street toward them. From what it looked like it was unarmed, but just the sheer size of it made Sheffield want to turn and leave before it got to where he and Sarah were.

"Oh god." He said just loud enough for Trina to hear and turn around. The rest of the Umbrella guards and the two S.T.A.R.S. were standing over the body of the Licker. She spotted the huge figure and grabbed one of the straps on Sheffield's vest. She flung him down and then grabbed Sarah.

"We have got _really _big problems." She said. The giant got to the bottom of the hill they were on and much to Sheffield's dark surprise it opened fire with a huge mini-gun. Trina dove to the ground and rolled over Nathan.

"Sarah!" he yelled. She quickly crawled to him and the three of them waited for the bullets to stop flying. Nathan got up, grabbed the two women, and dragged them down the street followed by Brandon and Fairfax.

"Sheffield!" yelled Hallsworth as he got up and his men returned fire.

"Come on!" he yelled back. The behemoth opened fire again and this time caught Davis in the thigh. Sandler moved to pick him up and the rest of Hallsworth's team moved off in the other direction.

The giant topped the hill they had been on and looked down at Sheffield and his group as they sprinted down the street. Its vision focused on the S.T.A.R.S. that were following and he moved to aim his mini-gun at them.

He didn't fire calculating that they were too far away for his aim to be accurate. He stood there for a moment processing what to do next. Weather he should follow the S.T.A.R.S. and the unknown soldier, or continue with his trek toward City Hall. "Return to City Hall." Moved across his vision and he did what he was told to.

What he didn't know was that the Umbrella tech staff that was issuing him orders had seen everything, and now knew that Hallsworth's team were traitors.

The Umbrella Corporation had awakened one of their darkest secrets to take care of the renegades.

13. Unexpected Guests

**Chapter 13- Unexpected Guests**

Major Cain stood rigid with his arms crossed and looked at the computer screen over one of the tech's heads. He had seen Hallsworth and his team. They had directly disobeyed orders and for some reason were out in the city.

"Commander," he said the tech before him, "Let's take care of the traitors." The tech froze and stared straight at the screen for a moment.

"Yes sir. Bringing him online now." She said as she typed commands into the computer.

The Umbrella Corporation had just awakened one of their darkest secrets to take care of the renegades.

Raymonds sat behind a heavy wood desk with his chin on the top. He held a small computer chip between his index and middle finger and just stared at it. The chip was a hardware implant that he would insert into the mayor's computer and would implant a virus into the computer and completely destroy any evidence that someone had tried to record.

There was a knock on the door.

"Come." He said without taking his chin off the desk.

"Sir, the cleanup is finished and we are piling the bodies outside of the plexi-glass wall. What would you like us to do to them?" Raymonds thought for a moment.

"Burn them. That way they will be sure not to get up again." He said disgustedly. The guard nodded his head and backed out of the room. He returned his attention to the small sharp bumps of the computer chip and wondered why Umbrella had them murder the surviving R.P.D.

He dismissed the thought and cursed at himself for questioning his orders. He got up, moved around to the back of the desk and pried open the back of the mayor's computer. He pulled one of the RAM chips out and put his in its place. He then booted the computer and saw the monitor flash on for a moment and then die.

Raymonds knew that he had just destroyed every single computer record in Raccoon City, even the city website.

Nathan helped Trina along so they could move faster.

"That was Project Nemesis." She said. "I've been wondering when he would show up." Sheffield glanced back to see if they were being followed. A few zombies were limping and stumbling after them but the monster, Nemesis, was thankfully not after them.

Fairfax stopped and shot the zombies that were after them.

"What do you mean you were wondering?" asked Sheffield. "You knew that thing would be chasing us and you didn't say anything!"

"He's a secret project, and if you are actually a marine then I'm in breach of my confidentiality agreement anyway." She replied.

"I'm pretty sure they don't give a damn about your agreement given the fact that he just tried to kill you." He said. "And me, and Sarah, and the rest of your team." He added. "Trina, if there are any more monsters that Umbrella has that might be after us now, you need to tell me."

"There are no more that I know of." Sheffield eyed her seriously. "I swear. There are no more that I know of." Nathan frowned at her and helped her up.

"Wait, so there could be another monster like that one out in the city and you don't know about it?" asked Fairfax. "I don't like that."

"We should keep moving. The zombies will get here and in large numbers." Said Trina.

"I agree." Replied Sheffield as he put her arm around his shoulder and began down the street. Sarah followed and Fairfax after her, but Brandon stayed for a moment and looked down the opposite end of the street at the crowd of zombies that was forming and slowly moving toward him. He slightly shook his head, turned and followed the others.

Raymonds smiled at the thought that by morning he would have Hallsworth's command. He couldn't believe his stupidity. Hallsworth was the most trusted security operative Umbrella had. Once Cain had seen Hallsworth and his team through Nemesis' eyes, he told Raymonds personally that he would call command and recommend him to be the one to take Hallsworth's position.

Now it was only a matter of time until all his years of sucking-up and killing for Umbrella would pay off.

Raymonds had taken the first chopper that left City Hall after they had cleared it and disposed of all the S.T.A.R.S. and RPD that had been holed up in it. He was now walking across the field to meet an elite group of mercenaries Umbrella had hired to retrieve something of great value. They hadn't told him what it was but he assumed they would in the morning.

He and his personal guards briskly walked across the LZ and met the mercs as they got out of their chopper.

"Commander Raymonds I presume?" yelled the leader so he could be heard over the chopper. It rose into the sky and disappeared into the distance before Raymonds spoke.

"Yes, and you are?"

"I am John, leave it at that. This is my team and they are ready to go when a chopper is ready.

"Major Cain wants to see you before you depart, I will take you to him." Replied Raymonds. He turned to one of his guards. "Malcolm, tell them about infected citizens. Come." He said motioning to John.

"We already know how to kill them. This is not our first mission for Umbrella."

"Good for you." Muttered Raymonds. He led John toward a large tent. They were just about to enter when Cain came out to greet them.

"John, It's been a long time." He said waving Raymonds away. He started back to the group they had just left wishing he could hear what they were saying. "Unfortunately we've had another BM problem, howeverâ€¦" Raymonds heard before he was out of earshot.

"Nine more hours." He muttered to himself.

Once again a black helicopter thudded over Sheffield's group but this time they were ready and had taken cover lest they tried to turn them into Swiss cheese with mini-guns again. However the helicopters came to a hover and several men and women zip-lined down onto the street with numerous boxes and even a trolley to haul them.

The black clad people started moving up the street. Brandon appeared out of the shadows and kneeled next to Sheffield.

"They don't look like Umbrella guards." He said.

"Their not. They are mercs. And if that is who I think it is then we better just walk away and forget we ever saw them." She said.

"Why is that?" asked Fairfax as he sat down next to Sarah.

"I know I'm not a match for them and the two of you sure as hell aren't." she said to the two S.T.A.R.S. "Sheffield, you might be, but certainly not for fifteen of them."

"We'll follow at a distance so they don't know we're-"

"We don't need to follow them. I know where they are going, but I don't suggest following them."

The group had moved into the street now.

"Maybe we can use their evac chopper to-" he was cut off by a familiar sound.

A sound that was a mix of electricity crackling and a high pitched whirring. His heart skipped a beat and his stomach lurched. He forced himself to turn around and face an unexpected and unwanted guest. A four-foot tall, one eyed, green skinned Vortigaunt was staring back at him. The rest of the group stared at the creature in horror and awe.

The alien seemed to recognize that it wasn't in Black Mesa anymore and seemed recognize that Sheffield should have been in Black Mesa but wasn't. It was wondering the same thing Sheffield was; what the hell are you doing here?

The Marine and the Vortigaunt both quickly got over their disorientation and moved to strike each other. The alien spread it's arms wide to gather the energy needed to fire a bolt and Nathan went for his gun.

Everything happened so fast that the others didn't realize what had happened until it was over. The Vortigaunt clapped its claws together and fired a green lightning bolt that narrowly avoided Sheffield as he dove out of the way. He opened fire with his MP5 and tore away half the aliens' head sending tan colored gore everywhere.

Fairfax toppled to the ground dead. The bolt had hit him in the chest and burned a hole straight through him. Brandon was to shocked about seeing an alien to react to his friend's death. They all were except for Sheffield.

"I think we should follow the mercs." He said to Trina. She nodded, not listening to what she was agreeing to. "Where are they going?" She looked at him with blank eyes.

"Hive B." she replied.

14. Bigger Problems

**Chapter 14- Bigger Problems**

Outpost Delta had been stationed since before the outbreak started in the south section of the city. Aside from City Hall, which was the main point of interest for Umbrella, Outpost Delta was the second. It was an easy access position for choppers to drop off supplies and troops. It also served as an extraction point for the wounded.

Sergeant Gary Hoff was the on-site commander of Outpost Delta. His orders were to kill anything that approached the entrance to the converted multi-level garage that was Outpost Delta. So far they hadn't had much of a problem with the infected civvies and were able to keep the large steel door open to let wounded soldiers in. Anything not wearing an Umbrella uniform was to be shot on site.

He walked around the main level inspecting his tired troops and wishing this nightmare would be over. This was much more than he had bargained for when he interviewed for the Umbrella Security Force.

One of the men got up as he passed and offered him a cigarette.

"No, I quit about a month ago." He said.

"Oh, come on sir, you could use it." Hoff stopped walking and looked at the tempting roll. He gave in and took it much to the delight of the guard who lit it for him.

"Three months of working at not doing this. Screw it." He said and tasted the comforting tobacco.

"Sir, there are some rumors that we're going to leave soon."

"Six a.m. They are going to nuke the city." Replied Hoff as he started walking again. The private stood there for a moment and then followed Hoff.

"How are they going to cover that up?"

"Meltdown at the power plant."

"Whoa, that's some messed up sh-"

"Don't think about it. It's not your job." Said Hoff getting irritable that the private was even thinking about it. "Get back to your place"

"Incoming!" yelled one of the guards that was watching the entrance. The two looked over to see what the yelling was about and to their horror saw an Umbrella jeep about half way down the street screaming

toward them at a very high speed.

Three guards were in the back of it shooting at something and the passenger was reloading his weapon. The jeep got another quarter of the way to the entrance before something green arced out of the shadows and hit the back of it making it explode and throwing the jeep head-over-heel onto the pavement. The bodies had disappeared in the explosion and left only the flaming wreckage.

Another green bolt flew at one of the guards at the entrance and hit him in the face completely burning off his face.

"Shut it!" screamed Hoff. Two guards started turning a large wheel and the heavy steel door started to close. It was almost at the floor when a thick arm stopped them from getting it all the way down. The arm flung the door up with little effort and revealed several creatures.

They were about eight feet tall and were quite large. They had somewhat blue skin and their right arms' seemed to have some sort of wiggling animal grafted on.

The creatures raised their animal arms and the room was filled with buzzing and small orange hornet-like bugs. The Umbrella guards tried to get up and shoot back but the small bugs tore through their armor and into their flesh killing many of them before they got to their feet.

The ones who were already on their feet sent bullets in the direction of the hornet shooting monsters but only harmlessly pinged off their incredibly thick armor.

Hoff shot one of the monsters several times in the head before it finally dropped to its knees and died. The others roared in anger at their comrades' death charged into the garage. Hoff dove behind a car along with the private who had just gotten behind only to catch several bugs, which had sensed him and turned to attack him. He screamed briefly before the bugs killed him.

He looked up to see one of the monsters stab one of his men straight through with its other pointed arm. The other guards were falling back toward the elevator suffering heavy casualties as they did so.

Hoff heard something to his right and looked over to see a small cat size creature leap onto his face and dig its claws into his spinal column and back of his head. He tried to scream but realized he couldn't open his mouth. Gary Hoff then blacked out, never to have control of his body again.

"Fall back goddamnit, now!" was the first thing Hallsworth heard when he turned on the radio to listen to Umbrella's chatter. He wanted to see if they had figured out his team was not following orders from their encounter with Nemesis.

Right now all he could hear was overlapping screaming and gunfire. It sounded like every soldier Umbrella had in the city was fighting something. "What the hell are these things!" "Get down! Fire in the hole!" "Medic!"

"Do they know we are AWOL?" asked Sander tightly wrapping Davis' leg.

"No, I don't think so. But it sounds chaotic, like everyone is fighting."

"Maybe the infected civvies are becoming too much for them to handle."

"Perhaps." He said doubtfully.

"Come to think of it, I haven't seen masses of them for hours."

"They're all downtown because they know that there are people in City Hall. Lucky for us they are trying to get in there."

A single shot made them jump and Price lowered his gun upon seeing the zombie drop to the ground.

"Hey, I know where we are." Said Davis as Sandler helped him up. "We're not far from Ashford's daughter's school." He said. All of them turned and looked at him.

"Where is it?" asked Price.

"About half a mile up the street."

"Well let's go then."

"What about Trina and the rest of them?" asked Sandler to no one in particular.

"Sheffield's a Marine, I'm sure they'll be fine." Replied Hallsworth. "For now." He added. On that note they started down the street toward the school.

It had taken Sheffield about fifteen minutes to finally get his group out of their shock. Sarah had recovered the fastest since Sheffield had already told her about the aliens and Black Mesa, but she was still in some disbelief.

Trina had quietly led them up the street as not to alert the Mercs to their presence, and stopped in front of a bland looking building with the extremely familiar red and white Umbrella logo.

"The lab goes ten levels underground." She said. "I don't know what's down there though. Never actually been in there."

"If that's the case I'm guessing that the elevator is not going down unless we have a pass or something." Added Brandon.

"Retinal and fingerprint scan." She replied. "All Umbrella labs require those to gain access."

"Great." Said Nathan. "Maybe we can catch one of them by surprise and get in that way."

"I doubt it. They're not that dumb." Replied Trina.

"It's worth a try." Said Sheffield as he got up and ran across the street in a half crouch and making sure his MP5 was ready.

Brandon and Trina exchanged looks and followed him leaving Sarah sitting behind the car by herself. She watched them stealthily open the door and disappear inside the dark building. She reached back and pulled her pistol from her back pocket and moved across the street the same way the others had done. She was beginning to get the hang of this soldier stuff.

Sarah entered the building and quickly moved into the shadows to the right. Sheffield reached into his backpack and pulled out a weird looking gas mask that only had one nozzle on the right and two big green lenses. He put it on and Sarah thought he looked like an alien with it on.

Nathan activated his night vision mode from his mask and motioned for the others to stay where they were. He raised his gun and crept into the dark hallway that led down to the main elevator.

Something came out of the shadows to his right and hit him in the face. He fell back rolled to avoid a second blow from landing on his face. Sheffield then kicked at what was assaulting him and sent him into the wall. He quickly got up and moved his arm to block a punch from the enemy and swung his own fist around landing it in the man's jaw.

The man slumped to the ground and dropped his head unconscious. Sheffield quickly retrieved his gun and made sure the rest of the hall was clear for the rest of his group. It looked as if the Merc he had just fought was merely there as a guard and that the rest of them had been in the labs below for a while now.

"All clear." He said loudly. The other three came down the hall and joined him at the elevator. Nathan replaced his mask in his backpack.

"How do we get in?" asked Sarah noting the thickness of the door.

The elevator door flew open in many different pieces and fell down the ten-story elevator shaft. Sheffield leaned in and looked down. Blue wall lights illuminated the shaft.

"Told you a Det-Pack would work." observed Nathan.

"Okay," said Trina trying to keep Sheffield from being totally right. "How do you propose we get down?"

"How do you think?" She gave him an irritated look. "Ladies first." He said. Trina leaned out, grabbed the elevator cable, and swung onto it. She attached her zip line clamp to the cable and held down the tension trigger.

"Smart ass." She said and released it. She plummeted nine stories before stopping herself.

"Well, we get to climb down the old fashioned way." Said Nathan. He extended his arm signaling Brandon to get on and start climbing down. The officer did as he was told. Sheffield turned and knelt down

next to Sarah. "Can you climb down yourself or do you want to hold onto my back?" he asked.

"I think I can do it myself." She replied sweetly. "I've been with you all day, I'm starting to get this whole soldier thing." Sheffield smiled.

"Okay, but be careful. I'm going to get on first and then you follow. That way if you slip then I will be able to catch you." She frowned at him.

"I'm sixteen. I can do this without you looking out for me." Sheffield looked into her eyes.

Ever since Nathan was a kid, he had been able to almost see what people were thinking. He had never been able to explain it, but it was almost as if he could become them and feel what they were thinking.

As he looked into Sarah's eyes he saw that she was really starting to get tired of everyone treating her like a child and that she really could take care of herself when it came down to it. She was very strong and mature for her age, and that was now clear to Sheffield.

"Okay, go down first." He said. She nodded and without hesitation, grabbed the cable and climbed down. Sheffield followed her down and they all dropped into the elevator through the top escape hatch.

15. Dirty Little Secrets

**Chapter 15- Dirty Little Secrets**

Sandler's flashlight beam moved across the various surfaces in the cafeteria of Angela Ashford's school. He looked carefully around for any threats, namely Lickers.

The Lickers seemed to like confined small spaces where they could hide and attack their prey easily. Places like this school where they could leap out from a room or from the ceiling.

Sandler couldn't for the life of him figure out why someone would make something like a Licker.

His beam moved across several bodies with bullets through their heads. He looked around, decided it was clear for the rest to enter, and motioned for them to come.

Hallsworth helped Davis into the room and Price followed them. He was moving backward watching the rear to make sure they wouldn't be snuck up on by something. Hallsworth set Davis down on the ground gently and looked around the dark room.

He spotted a mutilated body lying face up on the ground and recognized that he was wearing a uniform identical to the one his team was wearing and his stomach churned. Only one other team in Umbrella's security force wore a uniform like theirs, Carlos Olivera's team, and he hoped to god it wasn't Carlos as he went over

not fully wanting to see who it was.

"Price!" he called.

"Sir?" replied Price as he came over. He stopped suddenly seeing the body. "Oh god." He muttered.

"I'm sorry." Said Hallsworth.

"Who is it?" asked Davis from across the room.

"Ginovaeff." Replied Hallsworth sorrowfully. Nicholai Ginovaeff was one of Price's better friends and now he was lying on the floor mauled by what looked like a dog.

"If Olivera has been here, then the girl is with him." Said Hallsworth. "There's no point in looking for her anymore."

"Then what's our plan of action for getting out of the city before morning?" asked Sandler.

"We can't go back to City Hall. It's been too long, they will have the plexi-glass up by now." Said Davis.

"We could get a sample of blood from an infected citizen. It will have a sample of the T-virus in it and we can use that as some leverage." Said Price standing up from the body.

"That's not a bad-" Hallsworth was cut short by a loud crash of pots and pans from the kitchen and the whole team turned around instantly with their guns leveled. Davis picked himself up and aimed also.

A small cat-size animal leapt onto the counter and started crawling toward them. It had two, what looked like arms, in front of it that were moving up and down as if sniffing.

The team didn't know what to make of it and held their fire. Another taller creature stood up from behind the counter and turned toward them. It looked as if it had been human at one point but was all bloody like a zombie. It wasn't a zombie however, or at least not one like the team had seen before.

It moved slowly waving its long tentacle-like arm around. Its chest had grotesquely opened up and formed what looked like a mouth with the rib bones. Atop its broken gruesome body was one of the tan cat-sized creatures that had leapt from the counter.

Before any more thought was given, all four of them opened fire on the small creature turning it into a tan gory mess. The taller ones swung its arm at the counter that was keeping it from the Umbrella soldiers and completely obliterated it sending chunks of drywall at the team.

They returned fire toward its head and riddled the creature with bullets. Its body went rigid and plopped to the ground. Sandler cautiously moved toward it and moved his aim up and down the length of the body to make sure it was dead.

"What the hell was that thing?" asked Price utterly scared and confused. Before anyone could answer, they heard a weird noise and

turned to the right to see a large lizard with several red, what looked like thick fingers protruding from its mouth, materialize from a green light.

It roared and charged at Price and Hallsworth. They dove out of the way and left Davis wide open. He tried to shoot it but was too slow. It stopped just short of him and spun, slamming its powerful tail into him, killing him almost instantly, and sending his broken body across the room.

"No!" screamed Sandler and opened fire. Price and Hallsworth recovered and joined him in riddling the monster with bullets. It managed to spit something across at Price before it screeched and died. The spit impacted into his chest and started melting his armor. He screamed and ripped it off as fast as he could.

He managed to get it off before it went all the way through and tossed the vest on the ground. The three survivors watched it disintegrate.

"Let's go." Said Hallsworth and walked out of the cafeteria. Price followed but Sandler stayed behind for a moment. He heard another roar and sprinted out to join his team. They were going to have to fight their way out against these creatures, or aliens, as he had come to suspect.

The scene beyond the elevator was horrific. Blood was smeared all over the walls and bodies littered the floor. Some were charred and some were missing limbs. All of them, however, were wearing some form of Umbrella insignia, scientists and guards alike.

At the end of the hall was a broken barricade with spent bullet shells all over the floor from two heavy machine guns that now lay dormant, their gunners smeared all over the wall and floor.

Sheffield guessed that this was where the alien invasion into the city had begun. From there, the teleportation field must have gotten bigger allowing them to start coming into the city from outside this lab.

Sarah knelt down next to a body and picked up an MP5k. She examined it, quickly figured out how it worked, and pulled the magazine out to check the number of bullets. It was nearly spent. She searched the body for more clips and found several strapped to the dead guards' belt. She unflinchingly detached the belt and strapped it around her waist then proceeded to reload her new gun.

"Poor guys." Said Trina quietly. Nathan looked around and made his way to the barricade. Several string like tongues were hanging down from creatures attached to the ceiling.

Sheffield had seen these before, in Black Mesa. They would stick to the ceiling and let their tongues hang down to catch unwary prey. Once they had their food it was almost impossible for them to escape unless they attacked the creature itself and killed it before it had them.

"Watch your step." Said Sheffield turning around. "Don't touch the tentacles." He turned back toward the aliens and moved around the

barricade and toward the other end of the hall carefully avoiding the tongues.

"That's what you call a hangover." Said Brandon jokingly. Trina giggled. The rest of the group did the same as Sheffield and they made it to the end without incident and descended the staircase.

The stairs were equally as bloody and body ridden as the first hall was and shell casings once again littered the floor and charred bodies were everywhere. It looked as if a vicious battle had taken place there.

Sheffield stopped and knelt down next to a body to get a closer look.

"These aren't Vortigaunt burns. Too wide, Vortigaunts are more concentrated. This is from something else, something that I wasn't briefed on." He said in a concerned tone. He didn't like the fact that there was another alien race that he didn't know about or how to kill.

"Vortigaunt?" asked Sarah.

"The alien that fried Fairfax."

"Oh."

Nathan stood back up and they finished going down the stairs. The group entered a lobby of sorts that had several zombies near a reception desk feeding on a body that didn't look human.

Sarah fired at them first followed by Brandon and they were down in a matter of seconds.

The body looked to be about seven or eight feet tall and the parts that hadn't been touched by the zombies was a pasty white colored skin. It's head only had one red eye that reminded Nathan of a snake.

At the end of the lobby was a small sanitizing chamber and a heavy metal door at the end that looked as if it had been pried open.

Sheffield walked into the sanitization room and crouched down so he could get under the half open door. The room beyond was nothing short of massive. The ceiling was at least a hundred feet up and the space between him and an extremely heavy set of blast doors was at least the length of a football field if not more. Once again there were bodies everywhere but strangely no zombies.

Nathan looked around and spotted several doors with the Umbrella logo on it. Under the logo in red lettering, was the word Armory.

They were large garage doors and it looked as if most of them had been kept locked and largely untouched. He led the group over to one of the doors and looked through the window. He couldn't see anything partly because the lights on the other side were turned off and also that the windows were tinted.

"I can hack that." Said Trina. "It's only a key code." She walked up

to the control panel and pried it open with her knife just as Klive had done so many hours ago. She cut and retied wires for about five minutes before the door finally slid up.

Sheffield clicked on his flashlight and looked around for a light switch. He found it and turned on the lights. The small garage housed a Humvee and racks upon racks of automatic weapons. There were also loaded magazines of every kind on tables and even more in boxes under the racks and tables. There were even several stands holding body armor against the wall.

A wooden door stood in the back of the room next to another window. Nathan guessed it was probably an office. Brandon took it upon himself to check out the office while the others looked around the room.

He tried to open the door by its handle and not to his surprise was locked. He swiftly kicked it in and turned on the light switch that was on the wall next to the door. Brandon could hear a whimpering and he looked around hoping it was a survivor and not an alien. He knelt down realizing it was coming from under the desk, and saw a man in a white lab coat pointing a pistol at him.

"Whoa!" he cried and stumbled backward. "Put the gun down, I'm not going to hurt you." He said. Trina and Sheffield came into the room quickly and aimed at the scared scientist.

"Drop it." Said Trina in her most threatening voice. He did as he was told and they lowered their guns. Brandon offered him his hand and helped him out from under the desk.

"Where did the mercs go?" asked Sheffield. The scientist looked at him but was too scared to answer. Exasperated, he looked at the wall farthest him and spotted a wall clock. His heart skipped a beat when he saw the time. He checked his watch to make sure. It was 3:30 a.m., which meant the bombing was only about two and a half hours away. They were running out of time, and fast.

He turned around and picked the scientist up by his shirt.

"We are running out of time. Now where did the mercs go?" asked Nathan. The scientist shook his head.

"I don't know." They came in here from the west entrance with boxes and all kinds of gear and went straight to Black Mesa!" he cried. Sheffield jumped slightly at the mention of Black Mesa by the Umbrella scientist. He knew something was seriously wrong and that maybe Umbrella went a lot deeper into conspiracies than just this city and their T-virus.

"What do you mean, Black Mesa?" he asked slowly. The scientist seemed reluctant to answer but did anyway. "It's a secret U.S. government research facility in the New Mexican desert-"

"No, I know what Black Mesa is, what the hell does Umbrella have to do with it?" Now the scientist seemed really reluctant to say any more and Trina saw this. She moved her gun slightly so he would see it again.

"Umbrella has been bribing Black Mesa's administrator, Dr. Breen, to

give them Xenian's to experiment on." He said quickly.

"Xenian's..." muttered Sheffield. Xenian was the formal name for the aliens. From what Sheffield understood, the planet they came from was called Xen, or at least by the scientists who had discovered it and them.

"Extraterrestrial-"

"I know." Said Nathan cutting him short again. "How did they get there if they came in here?" asked Sheffield realizing the answer before he finished asking the question.

"Dr. Breen sold us the technology to build a transporter so we could teleport back and forth for the specimen exchange."

"Then Umbrella knows what's happened at Black Mesa." Said Nathan to himself. "That means they are going to try to cover their tracks before we find them! Hot damn! That's how we are going to bring them down!" he said turning to the other who looked utterly confused. "Trina, take our friend here to the teleportation lab and have him start it up. It's time to bring these bastards down."

16. Finally Understanding

Chapter 16- Finally Understanding

Major Cain had disappeared leaving Raymonds in charge of the city's problems. He had received orders to take back Hive B. Needless to say he had no idea at the time what he was going up against. No one had told him that an alien invasion had taken place. All he was told was that Hive B needed to be taken back, or at least cleared.

Raymonds had figured he was just going in for a routine clean up op. Every man and woman he had sent in there died. Five squads, that was twenty-five people, and insane amount of force for a simple clean up. Things had been going well until they started down the main staircase. He received reports of heavy casualties and had told them to fall back and wait for reinforcements.

That was the last he had heard of them. John had told him not to send anyone else because they didn't know what they were dealing with. John and his team then departed and that was the last he heard from the mercenaries.

Before Cain had left, he told John to brief Raymonds on everything that was going on. Raymonds now knew all about Black Mesa and the trading that was going on. He really hoped that Jack would destroy the records before the Marines that were occupying Black Mesa could get a hold of them and find them.

Commander Raymonds was seriously debating sending his own team into Hive B to re-take it. He would brief them himself, and make sure they knew exactly what they were going to be fighting.

"Commander, we have set up a defensive perimeter around this section of the city. The alien outbreak is completely contained, for now." Said a tech, interrupting his thoughts. He looked down at the map she had on the computer screen. He smirked at the irony that the aliens

were attacking the rich section of town, the section where Dr. Ashford lived.

"Have you figured out why they are coming into the city yet?"

"Negative sir. We are still running scans and taking readings, but we won't be done for another hour.

"I suggest you hurry. Detonation is set for six a.m."

"Yes sir."

"Raymonds wondered where Hallsworth and his team were and if they were still alive. He hoped they were, just so they could die by the nuke.

"Outpost Delta, come in. Repeat, Outpost Delta, come in now." Raymonds turned to the radio operator.

"Something wrong?" he asked.

"Yes sir, I can't reach Outpost Delta. They are overdue for a chopper drop-off and pickup."

"Don't bother anymore. They are most likely dead." He stated coldly.

"Yes sir." Replied the tech somberly, and switched off the radio.

Hallsworth fired the last few shots in his clip and tossed it aside. They had met several new creatures, the worst of which were green, lightning shooting ones. Hallsworth was completely out of ammunition and the other two were getting extremely close.

They were hiding behind a car hoping the lightning bolts wouldn't melt through it. Hallsworth heard the familiar moan of zombies and peeked around the corner of the car.

Dozens of them were spewing out of alleyways and onto the street attacking the creatures, or aliens as Sandler had said. The green aliens started shooting bolts at the undead but seemed confused as to why they weren't dieing.

The small cat-size creatures, or monkey-brains as Price called them, started leaping at the heads of the zombies and attaching them selves to them. Even several of the big armored aliens started shooting at them with their wasp guns, but the zombies quickly overwhelmed the aliens and began picking them apart.

Some of the "lightning" aliens sat up and started eating the bodies with the other zombies and Hallsworth guessed that the T-virus had affected them the same way it did humans due to the fact that none of the other alien got up.

The zombies that had been attacked by the monkey-brains got up and looked exactly like the one they had seen in the cafeteria. They started swinging their powerful arms at the regular zombies sending them flying in every direction.

Hallsworth had seen enough and motioned for his team to follow him into the nearest building. They entered quietly and looked around to make sure there were no Lickers.

It struck Hallsworth as ironic that even though they were fighting for their lives against aliens, they still had to worry about Lickers.

"This looks like one of those rich men clubs that you see in the movies." Remarked Sandler.

"You're right, maybe they'll have a car here." Agreed Hallsworth.

"It's worth a try. Maybe like a golf cart."

"Better than nothing." Sandler turned around and raised his almost empty gun. The tam could hear a very faint squeaking and what sounded like small feet running across the floor in the darkness. Before they could react, a Licker jumped out from the shadows and toward Sandler. He sidestepped just in time and the Licker smashed into the glass door behind them.

It rolled around on the sidewalk for a moment trying to get up. It looked as if it was running from something instead of attacking the three former Umbrella guards. It finally found its feet and took off up the street straight into the fighting between the zombies and monkey-brain zombies. Hallsworth turned back to see what the Licker had been running from.

A small creature, about two feet high, stood looking at them. Its arms looked like they had scythes on them that could do some massive damage. Three more came out of a hole in the wall. Hallsworth drew his pistol not wanting to take the chance that they would attack. He made the right decision, for as he pulled it out of his holster, the small aliens charged at them and tried to cut them with the blades on their arms. One even shot something out of its mouth that hit Sandler in his leg. Hallsworth and Price mowed them down with getting cut.

Sandler pulled what looked like an oversize thorn out of his thigh.

"It's not that bad, it didn't go all that deep."

"Now I really want to go home." Said Price. "Zombies are one thing, but aliens, wasn't in my job description."

"Lets just look for a car." Said Hallsworth offering a hand to Sandler.

"The aliens are teleporting here because the portal between Black Mesa and Xen is occasionally getting re-routed to here because of Umbrella's transporter." Explained Nathan to Brandon and Sarah as he quickly restocked his MP5 magazines and grenades.

"But why do you have to go there?" asked Sarah. "Why can't we just cut all the power to this machine?"

"Partly because if you want to bring Umbrella down then we need those files, and partly because the teleportation field is now much bigger than this lab. They activated it for some reason and that opened it for a little while when we saw the first Vortigaunt. Then the mercs opened it and the field is drawing energy from the other side and expanding. It's self-sufficient. The teleporter on the other side needs to be destroyed so it stops feeding the field."

Sheffield finished what he was doing and got into the Humvee along with the other two. He started it and pulled out into the big room.

"I still don't understand how that explains how you ended up in my school." Said Sarah.

"It's the same thing that's happening with the aliens. When I jumped into the portal after the security guard, he probably got to where he was going, but I got re-routed to here."

"But we're half way across the city from my school. I'm pretty sure that's out of the field."

"That's the one part I don't understand." Nathan admitted. They came to the large blast doors, which opened and gave them a view of the teleporter. It was huge, definitely large enough for him to drive through with the Humvee.

He opened the door and got out.

"Everything is ready to go Corporal Sheffield." Said the scientist from the control room on the second floor behind them.

"Where will I be exactly?" he asked.

"I don't know the exact location, but you should be near the main control center. That's about as far from the old teleportation labs as you can get. They are on the other side of the base."

"Just take the eastbound railroad and you'll end up in a depot, but from there you'll be able to find your way back rather quickly."

"Okay."

"Please don't forget to set the C4 before you leave again."

"I won't." he turned to get in the jeep but stopped. "Sarah had a good question. How come I ended up half way across the city if the field only extends so much?"

"At the time, the field wasn't active, but the power from the teleporter was. You see, these teleporters are like beacons to other teleporters. If it doesn't have enough power, or anywhere to put its matter, it will just send it to another one. I personally would have thought you'd have gone to the Lambda complex, it's much closer." He said. "With out the field being active, it is just a random location. The field acts as a pinpoint tool. You better hurry. We're running out of time."

Nathan nodded and got back into the jeep.

"Brandon, Trina, I want you two to stay here and guard this portal."

The lights dimmed as the portal activated.

"It's ready!" yelled the scientist. Sheffield accelerated into the round ball of light.

Everything once again flashed green and went dark.

17. Old Friends and New Allies

Chapter 17- Old Friends and New Allies

Sheffield had half hoped that something would go wrong and he would end up back in the Umbrella lab.

Black Mesa had undergone a radical change in the time he had been gone. Sheffield immediately recognized the area he had been teleported to. He was just outside the warehouse he had fought his way through when Nelson and Klive were still with him and Berkley.

He wondered if Berkely was still alive. He hoped so. Berkely was one of his better friends from basic.

The sky above Black Mesa was filled with millions of glowing white dots. He had never seen a sky so clear. Unfortunately he couldn't take the time to admire the beauty of it. He was extremely short on time.

Sheffield accelerated the jeep and drove it around the corner of the warehouse. He saw the same covered truck that they had passed earlier but the body was now missing.

A bright spotlight blasted through the windshield and blinded him. He slammed on the brakes and put his head down so he could recover his vision. He blinked a few times and looked up to see a tank cannon turn toward him. He went for the door handle and plunged out of the jeep and managed to crawl away for enough before the shell turned the Humvee into a flaming ball of metal. Sheffield got to his knees and waited for the disorientation to pass. He was just about to stand up when he felt several pairs of hands grab him and pin him down.

Once again he was blinded by a bright light and closed his eyes.

"Sheffield!" said a voice. "Let him up, he's one of ours." The hands holding him immediately let go of him and helped him up. Nathan blinked several more times to regain his sight.

Once he got it back he looked up at the soldiers that had almost killed him and recognized another soldier he had gone through Basic with.

"Reagan!"

"Sorry about that sarge. You should have made radio contact first."

He said.

"Why?"

Reagan looked at him inquisitively.

"Haven't you heard? There are some security guards that have some of our uniforms and are using them to get past us. So we have orders to kill anyone that comes near here without making radio contact first."

"Why here?"

Reagan looked at him again.

"This warehouse is now the secondary mission HQ." He said. "You didn't hear about that?"

"No, I had a stroke of bad luck and wasn't around to follow the updates." He said.

"Alright, return to you posts. I'm going to take him inside."

"Yes sir." Said one of the grunts and the rest of them moved back behind buildings and into shadows.

"Come on, it's safer inside sarge."

"Why do you keep calling me sarge?" asked Nathan. He couldn't figure out why Reagan kept calling him sir. He was a full corporal, same as Sheffield.

Reagan laughed.

"About eleven-hundred hours we got a call from Santego command saying that since all of your platoon sergeants were killed they were making you and Lawrence full sergeants." He said opening the door for Sheffield and following him in.

"What?"

"Yeah, everyone thought you were dead but no one had the heart to tell command that. We figured we'd report it when this was all over." He said guiltily.

"Thanks." Replied Nathan.

"You are now Sergeant Nathan Sheffield of the United States Marine Corps."

"What happened to Berkely?" he asked.

"Oh, he's out there somewhere. He was given command of the last five guys from your platoon and they sent him to retake the command center."

"How long ago was that?" he asked.

"'Bout an hour."

"Who's in command here, at the warehouse?" he asked.

"Lieutenant Keller was, but he got hit by one of those big grunts. That left Corporal DeMonte in charge and they were sending another lieutenant down to take Keller's place. So, you're in charge now. At least until the lieutenant arrives."

"Are you serious? I can't take command here; I have other things to do. Where are all the other sergeants?"

"Dead or missing." He said bluntly.

"God. I can't stay." He said. "I am in a real hurry."

"For what?" he asked. Sheffield debated what to tell Reagan. The door opened behind them and to Sheffield's great relief the replacement lieutenant walked in escorted by several Army Rangers.

"Why are there Rangers here?" asked Reagan more to himself than to Sheffield. "Ugh, I hate Rangers, cocky sons of-" he shut himself up and greeted the lieutenant with a crisp salute. Sheffield did the same.

"Corporal. Private." Said the lieutenant and returned the salute.

"Sergeant sir." Said Sheffield. "I got field promoted."

"Sheffield or Lawrence?"

"Sheffield sir."

"Congrats Sergeant Sheffield. They had me bring an extra stripe for you and Lawrence." He said reaching into his pocket and pulling out a gold stripe patch.

"Thank you sir." Said Sheffield taking the stripe from the lieutenant. He felt the bottom and realized it was sticky so he could stick it on his sleeve and sew it on later. He quickly stuck it on his sleeve.

"I'm going to need you to brief me on what happened here." Said the lieutenant.

"Um, I actually just got here sir. Private Reagan can brief you though."

"Sounds good, thank you sergeant." He signaled for Reagan to follow him and for his Rangers to stay behind.

"Sir, permission to have a squad so I can find a friend who I believe to be in trouble." He said quickly. The lieutenant stopped and turned around.

"Do you know where he is?"

"I know the whereabouts sir." The lieutenant looked at the floor. "I guess you've earned it sergeant. Bring your friend back alive." Sheffield's heart just about jumped out of his chest. He hadn't expected to get a yes.

"Thanks a lot sir." The lieutenant nodded and turned away to talk with Reagan. One of the Rangers stepped forward. "I'll go with you." He volunteered. "Corporal Clarke." He said and formed a salute as the other Rangers dispersed and inspected the warehouse.

Sheffield nodded.

"Thank you." He said and returned the salute.

"Berkely I presume?" asked a Marine that was standing against a box. Sheffield turned recognizing the voice as his bunkmate, Murphy. Nathan smiled upon seeing him. It made him happy that at least two of his friends had survived this long. "Jesus Nathe, you've been gone a while if you still have an MP5." he said seeing the submachine gun strapped to Sheffield's back. "That was the first drop. Second drop they sent M4A1 carbine's with M203's and much bigger guns." He said. "We have lots of boxes of them and everything."

"Well then, I'd better get one shouldn't I?"

"Come on." Said Murphy waving his arm for Sheffield to follow. He looked at the Ranger and extended his hand politely to let him go first. The two of them followed Murphy across the warehouse passing several wounded and resting Marines.

"What's up with Freeman? asked Sheffield as they stopped at several crates and Murphy opened one up to reveal many M4A1's buried in hay lying side by side.

"He's still down there, killing our guys." He replied bitterly. Sheffield went over to the crate and pulled out an M4A1 with the attached grenade launcher noticing how much longer and heavier it was than his MP5. He didn't mind though, he could still keep his MP5 as a secondary weapon since he had just loaded up on ammunition before he left.

Murphy opened up another crate full of magazines for the assault rifle. Nathan removed his backpack and placed all the extra MP5 clips he had acquired into it along with his small machine gun. He then replaced the room in his pouches with carbine clips, shoved one into the slot on the gun, and pulled the hammer back.

Now he felt like he was ready for anything.

"Oh yeah, Freeman was able to launch a rocket into orbit that would give the scientists in the Lambda Complex more control." He added once again, bitterly.

Sheffield no longer hated Gordon Freeman. He understood finally why he was doing the things he was. When he had killed the two Umbrella guards he had been fighting for his life because even if he had surrendered, they would have killed him. It was the same for the mad physicist. He was just trying to survive.

"So you guys are coming with me?" he asked. Clarke and Murphy both nodded. "Well, I think we're ready to go." He said.

"Not quite." Said Murphy. "You wouldn't want to go out there without one of-" he paused to open another crate. "These!" Nathan looked in

and almost hugged Murphy. Several M249 Squad Assault Weapons, or SAW's were lying comfortably in the hay.

Nathan was quite fond of the SAW machine gun, especially the modified version that was made especially for the Hazardous Environment Combat Unit. It was different in the fact that since they were normally belt fed, it made it hard for the user to carry other weapons. The HECU SAW as it had been named, had been built to have a small box that held a belt of seventy-five rounds that could attach to the bottom of it much like a magazine would fit into an assault rifle.

Sheffield clicked the safety on and slung the M4A1 over his back. He picked up the heavy gun, opened the crate that held all the boxes of ammo in it, strung it up into the chamber, and attached the box to the bottom.

The one thing he didn't like about the SAW was that it was extremely hard to carry extra ammunition for it. He found enough room on the straps of his backpack to attach four boxes to. The others did the same and they were ready to find Berkely and his team.

18. Relived Nightmares

Chapter 18- Relived Nightmares

No sooner had Sheffield's team left the secured area than they were under attack by aliens, mostly the large, armored, wasp shooting, Grunts. Nathan was extremely glad to have the SAW with him. It ripped through the large aliens' armor and just tore the smaller unarmored ones to shreds.

Clarke and Murphy were both helping out by launching grenades from their assault rifles at the Grunts and completely obliterating them.

There was quite a bit of evidence that Berkley's team had been through but the aliens they were fighting now seemed to have come and were preparing to attack the HQ. Sheffield guessed that they had no idea how effective the machine guns would be.

Even so, they wouldn't have made it past the tank and numerous M2HB .50 caliber turrets that were set up.

The three soldiers finally were able to get to a position where they could close and lock a set of blast doors to give them a break from the fighting and to evaluate their position.

"That should keep them out of our hair unless they know how to hack the system." Said Clarke as he turned around from the control panel.

"Haven't you ever seen Jurassic Park?" asked Murphy.

"Yeah?" replied Clarke, not understanding why the Marine was talking about movies at a time like this.

"Remember? They were like oh, the raptors are contained unless they know how to open doors. And what did the raptors do? They learned how to open the doors." He said matter-of-factly.

"And your point isâ€¦" asked Clarke still not comprehending. Murphy mumbled something incoherently.

"My point is, that you shouldn't assume they don't know how to hack the system. It will just come back to bite us in the ass."

"It's a really complicated system, even I had to think about it and I'm pretty good with systems like this."

"Never mind." Said Murphy exasperatedly.

"We're near the control center." Said Sheffield looking down the hall and then back at his PDA map. He hadn't been paying attention to the discussion. "It's not far." He turned toward them. "Lets keep moving." He said and then started down the hall toward the large door at the end.

Between them and the door were about ten badly burned and mutilated bodies in HECU uniforms.

"Watch it." Said Sheffield as he started toward the bodies. He aimed his gun around as he passed them. There was a huge crack in the wall that even he could fit into with all his gear. He pulled out his flashlight and clicked it on so he could see inside.

His beam caught some movement and he opened fire into the crack. An earsplitting screech echoed throughout the hall and the wall in front of him exploded outward throwing him against the opposite one. A huge green monster rose out of the crack and hit its head on the ceiling.

It was huge. The creature had a long plant stem-like neck and its head was pointed with a long sharp beak. Nathan recognized it as a Tentacle.

He got to his feet and yelled for the other two to fall back, but it was too late. The tentacle had sensed the others and moved for them. Murphy tried to move but the alien speared him with its long, large nose. He grunted as his blood was splashed all over the floor behind him and the Tentacle sank back into the now, very large hole with his body. Sheffield got the last two DetPacks he had and chucked them into the hole after the alien.

"Open the door, quickly. I don't know if this will work." He said. Murphy quickly ran to the door and started working. Sheffield flipped the button on the remote and pressed it just as the Tentacle came back through the hole for them.

Nathan dove to the ground just as a huge fireball exploded out of the hole and engulfed the alien. Its charred remains thumped to the floor and it twitched for a second but otherwise stopped moving.

It took Clarke a moment to get the door open. They went through it and found them selves back outside, only this time surrounded by boxes and a large open garage door on the far side.

They were about to start toward the other side when they were grabbed and pulled behind several boxes by some other Marines.

"Can't go out there." whispered one of them to Sheffield. "Bogies all over the place. We're waiting for another squad of guys."

"We are all that's coming," said Clarke. "Everyone else is dead." The Marine looked at Sheffield who nodded. The marine closed his eyes and slammed his head on the box they were against.

"You're the sarge, sarge." whispered one of the Marines. Sheffield nodded and readied his gun. The others did the same but they didn't have to move from their cover.

Several Vortigaunt's trotted around the box they were hiding behind and the soldiers opened fire before they could zap them.

"Go!" yelled Sheffield knowing their secret was blown. He charged out first and opened fire. The force of the gun severely slowed him down, more so than he already was. He stopped firing, crouched, and began firing again. The force almost knocked him off his feet and he decided that it was too much weight for him to handle but kept the heavy gun in hand for the moment.

Clarke kneeled next to him and kept firing with his M249. Boxes were exploding and several marines were already dead. However more aliens were on the ground bleeding. Sheffield didn't stop firing until he had run out of bullets and the last alien had fallen.

He reloaded it and tossed it to Clark once he and stopped shooting.

"I'm too heavy." He said and started unclipping the boxes of SAW ammo. "Take it if you want it."

It hadn't occurred to him when he had picked it up how heavy it would be on him. At first it hadn't been, but over the time they had been fighting to get to the Control Center, it had started to wear on him. It was slowing him down way too much and he knew full well that it could be fatal if he couldn't move.

Nathan un-shouldered his M4A1 and felt as if he had just been released of at least fifty pounds. Clarke picked up the SAW and only two of the four extra boxes. The last surviving Marine came limping toward them, his leg burned very badly. He collapsed next to Clarke and began digging through his backpack for some wrapping.

"Can I help?" asked Clarke.

"No, I got it." He replied. Sheffield checked his PDA and saw they were pretty close to the Control Center. He clicked on his radio hoping they were in range.

"This is Sergeant Nathan Sheffield, calling and HECU presence in the vicinity of the Control Center, come in." He let the button go and listened for a reply.

The thudding of an Osprey drowned any reply that might have been said. It was jet black unlike the regular HECU ones that were a desert camouflage color. It came to a hover over the area that the soldiers were sitting.

Several ropes dropped down and six men in all black zipped down. Some

of them were wearing small red goggles over their eyes and others were wearing ski masks, but all of them were wearing vests and full body armor. They carried MP5's and Beretta's.

"No one said anything about Black Ops. guys being involved in this mission." Said the injured Marine.

"They're here to set up a bomb." Replied Clarke. "In case we can't take back the facility they plan to blow it up."

"Sergeant Sheffield! Sir!" said one of the Black Ops. troops as he approached. "I have orders to keep you from reaching the Control Center until we are sure it is secured."

"No, I have permission from the on site lieutenant to get down there and rescue a friend." He said loudly as the Osprey disappeared as quickly as it had appeared. He heard some of them land behind them and immediately became suspicious.

Black Ops. was notorious in the Hazardous Environment Combat Unit for taking things into their own hands and it was not always good for the grunts. They were known to kill the grunts if they got in the way of them accomplishing their mission. Although the Black Ops. Corps wasn't actually part of HECU; they did supposedly "back them up" on large missions. The generals and commanders would never acknowledge it, but the grunts knew full well not to get in the way of the Black Ops. because they wouldn't hesitate to kill them.

The Black Ops. Corps was possibly the most elite branch of the armed forces, and the most secret. Nathan had once hoped to get into them, but some of the stories he had heard from HECU veterans made him change his mind.

Sheffield looked in back of him.

"And you gave you your orders to keep me from it?" he asked somewhat snidely.

"Command." He retorted.

"I have trouble believing that command would send a whole team of you people to stop a sergeant from reaching the control center when several squads have already made it there." He said as he pushed past the man.

Just as he had expected, the Black Ops. troops had meant to get rid of them from the start. The trooper moved to break his neck but Nathan dodged and landed the butt of his gun in the man's face.

Clarke also seemed to sense the danger and opened fire at the black clad troops with his SAW ripping them apart. In the first few seconds, two of the three in front of them were dead and the third was on the ground unconscious. The three behind them tried to open fire. The injured Marine shot back at them with his Desert Eagle. He hit one of them in the head and Sheffield shot the other two also in the head, but one of them managed to squeeze off a shot that ripped through the injured Marine's vest.

Blood pooled in his mouth and ran down his cheek. His eyes went

blank.

"What the hell was that?" asked Clarke. "These vests can stop anything."

"Armor piercing rounds. They aren't here to help us, there here to blow the facility with everyone in it." He said looking at the Marine's body and knowing that he would never know his name. Clarke looked at him.

"Not with us." He said.

"I don't know, but either way, we should get to the Control Center."

The red and white Umbrella logo stood proudly above the gated entrance to the B Level parking garage. Just on the other side of the garage was the West entrance to Hive B and was much more guarded than either the South or North.

Everything was quiet outside the garage, zombies were occasionally moving past the gate but other than that, there was no activity.

The loud rumble of a diesel engine broke the quiet morning. It grew louder and alerted the few zombies that were standing in the street. They moved toward the sound and before they knew what hit them, a large, trailer less semi had smeared them all over its front and crashed through the gate into the garage.

"That's messy man." Remarked Sandler at what was left of the zombies on the windshield. Hallsworth clicked on the wipers, which only smeared the blood more.

Hallsworth slowed the semi and parked it awkwardly in front of the revolving door. The three guards stepped out of the truck and Hallsworth began looking in his vest pockets for his security badge so slip into the card reader. The door was motorized and wouldn't just open if someone pushed on it.

"Don't bother." Said Sandler and opened fire at the door. The bullets merely mushroomed in the glass but did no further damage.

"It's bulletproof smart one." Said Hallsworth as he finally found his badge and slipped it into the reader.

They all stepped onto the platform and the door started to move them into the facility. It made a one hundred-eighty degree turn and stopped. A luxurious reception lobby was in front of them with a large seal on the floor that had the Umbrella logo. A long wooded desk was at the far end of the lobby with a heavy steel door behind it. Blood was smeared all over the wood and chair. They three of them walked into the lobby with pistols drawn and pointing at the floor.

A dead alien-zombie was lying on the ground with several bullet holes in its head.

"Price, get on that computer and see if you can find a map or schematic of this place." Price promptly hopped over the desk and moved the mouse to wake up the computer.

"You haven't been here before?" asked Sandler to Hallsworth.

"Nope." He replied.

"Any particular place I'm looking for?" asked Price.

"Armory's first of all."

"There's one on this level, section 4B. It's just down that hall." He said proudly. "Anything else?"

"A lab where they might have a sample of the T-Virus hidden." Price typed something in and worked for a moment. He looked up at Hallsworth. "I have something better." He said, and a smile found its way across his lips.

SAW gunfire filled the hallway and several aliens fell. Clarke started to push ahead, but Sheffield stopped him.

"Can you hear that?" he whispered to the Ranger.

"Hear what?" he whispered back. Nathan was quiet for a moment.

"It's the radio." He said as he pulled his out and turned up the volume.

"â€| Sheffield out with extreme prejudice. He cannot be allowed to reach the Control Center; the data is still in the computers. Also be aware of the Umbrella Corporation troops that are now in the facility. Terminate them also with extreme prejudice. Once the data is secured, start your primary mission. Commander Kales, out."

Sheffield and Clarke exchanged glances. Commander Kales was the field commander of the Black Operations Corps. He answered to the president and his administration, but hardly anyone else. The grunts of HECU also knew that he liked to make things seem a _lot _worse than they really were.

Kales had probably told the president that HECU couldn't handle the invasion and that it would be a wise course of action to set a bomb as a last measure. Of course, he would blow it as soon as he got the chance and then claim that things were getting out of control and escape a court marshal because the president would back him up even though he didn't have clearance to give the detonation order.

"They want me dead pretty badly, are you sure you ant to stay?" he asked. Clarke smiled.

"Absolutely." He said. Sheffield smiled and shook the Rangers' hand.

19. Most Wanted

Chapter 19- Most Wanted

Sheffield seemed to be watching himself fight his way through the hordes of aliens. He felt as if he wasn't in his body and that he was

just on autopilot. He wondered if Berkely was still alive. Berkely had been one of two of his best friends since their first day at basic.

The other was Adrian Shephard, who had been his bunkmate for six months. Sheffield had no idea where Shephard was, last he had heard, Shephard and his team had been shot down somewhere over Black Mesa. He hoped Adrian was still alive as well. He had always been the kind to survive something like this, so Sheffield had a pretty strong sense he was still alive somewhere in the facility.

Berkely however, was different, he had always looked to either Adrian or Nathan for guidance, to tell him what to do. He wasn't so sure Berkely would last to long with out a squad behind him. Not that he was in capable; he just tended to depend on others to watch his back.

Nathan's thoughts shifted from his friends to the fact that now the Black Ops. Corps. wanted him dead and pretty soon the Umbrella Mercs would too. He just hoped that he would be able to get the proof and get back alive.

The two soldiers made their way down an extremely long hall and followed the signs and labels on the walls toward the Command Center.

By this time, Sheffield had been on his feet and moving for nearly twenty-one hours and he was getting extremely tired. Every time he wanted to ask Clarke to stop so he could take a quick break he thought of Sarah and Trina and knew that he had to keep going if he was going to get back in time to get out of the city before they detonated the nuke.

He felt as if Sarah was a sister to him and he could not let her down. Nor Trina. She had fought and worked just as hard as him to stay alive against the hordes of undead that had consumed the city. Not to mention the sudden and surprising appearance of the aliens.

This truly had been a day straight from hell itself. It sent chills up Nathan's spine to think about how many people had died just in Black Mesa alone, and thousands more in Raccoon City, and the Umbrella Corporation had been behind the majority of it.

Sheffield wouldn't be surprised one bit if it turned out that Umbrella had sabotaged Freeman's experiment and caused this "Resonance Cascade" or whatever the science team called it.

Speaking of Freeman, Nathan wondered where he was. As much as he had hated Gordon Freeman when he first arrived, he sympathized with him now. He Completely understood why Freeman was doing what he was.

"Something bothering you?" asked Clarke as they rounded a corner and made sure there were no aliens.

"No, I'm just thinking of some people I know that will die if I don't hurry. "

"Everyone is going to die weather we hurry or not. These damned

aliens are going to kill us all." He said darkly. Sheffield chuckled.

"Did you ever consider plans for when you got out of the Army?" asked Nathan.

"Yeah, I was going to apply to Umbrella's security force. Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service, UBCS." He said. Sheffield smiled.

"Take my advice, don't."

UBCS was the special unit that Hallsworth and his team belonged to. Technically all of the Umbrella guards in Raccoon City were UBCS troops, but Hallsworth was among the elite of them.

The two of them finally got to the end of the hall and stopped at a huge blast door. It had a huge painting of the Black Mesa symbol on it and under the symbol was the words Black Mesa Central Control.

Clarke immediately went to the panel at the side of the door and examined it. There were three security measures, a retinal scanner, a card reader, and a key code. He merely took out his sidearm and fired a couple times into the electronics. Sparks flew out and the plastic dropped to the floor.

He re-holstered his gun and started tying wired and various circuits together. The door slid open and he looked around. Sheffield leveled his gun and moved into the room sweeping it from side to side.

"You'd think that Central Command for the whole facility would be harder to get into than that." He said with some surprise.

"Maybe someone wants us to get in?" asked Nathan as he suddenly looked over to see a tall man in a dark blue suit and holding a briefcase, disappear behind an office door.

Sheffield had seen blueprints of the Command Center, but he hadn't imagined it to be so luxurious. It was much nicer than any of the places he had seen so far. Couches and plants were set up in eye-catching positions, and the walls were lined with giant portraits of the administration. There were even several ceiling windows that allowed the stars to be seen. Tall freestanding lamps were also turned on leaving the lobby in a soft comfortable glow. For the most part it didn't look damaged at all.

Sheffield led Clarke into the nice lobby and across it. They walked across an enormous seal that had what looked like a strand of DNA and the words Superbus Via Inscientiae surrounding it.

At the end of the lobby was a rotating door and the soldiers went through it. It led them into a wide room that had several long control panels with monitors and chairs separating each station. The monitors showed all different places of Black Mesa and displayed information about each section under the image.

"Look, the Anomalous Materials Lab." Remarked Clarke. The Anomalous Materials Lab was ground zero, the place where this entire disaster

started. The image showed it too. The large machine in the center of the room was damaged severely and the various catwalks above it were bent and crushed from chunks of ceiling.

Freeman was reported to have been at Ground Zero when the cascade happened. No one knew if he was responsible for sabotage, or if one of his research assistants had given him the wrong sample to test. Perhaps it was a complete accident and no one could have known what would happen.

Sheffield personally knew, he wasn't sure how, but he just knew that the only thing Freeman had done was press the button to turn on the machine.

Nathan sat in the chair that showed the Anomalous Materials Lab and brought up the search screen. He typed in Control Center and began cycling through the various security screens it brought up. He passed one of Clarke and him and found what he was looking for.

In the main control room there were about eight of Umbrella's mercenaries standing and sitting around casually guarding a squad of HECU soldiers. Two more of them appeared dragging a soldier out by his arms and roughly setting him down next to the other troops.

"Is that your friend?" asked Clarke.

"No, I don't see him," said Sheffield. He tapped a button a few times and they could hear the mercs talking.

"He didn't say anything. We nearly killed him."

"Take another one. Use him as an example if you have to." Replied the commander maliciously.

Sheffield had heard enough; he grabbed his gun and bolted down the hall toward where the mercs were. Clarke followed him and they got ready for a gun battle.

The two stopped at the large glass doors that led into the room where they needed to be. The glass was separated into four sections by a cross of steel frames. Nathan silently showed Clarke that he was going to smash it in with his gun butt and the move from there. He wanted Clarke to stay at the door and provide support with the SAW.

Once he understood the plan, Sheffield didn't waste any time in executing it. He quickly smashed the pane closest to him and crawled through. The mercs heard this and started shooting randomly trying to scare him off. Once he was through, he got into a crouching position and shot the two closest to him before they realized there was a real threat in the room.

The other six turned and saw Sheffield who flipped over a steel table just as they opened fire. Clarke joined in the fray with the SAW and took out three more. The remaining three disappeared behind pieces of furniture and support columns. The low light didn't help matters either.

Sheffield had been hoping they could get them all before they found hiding places. Nathan quietly peeked around the corner only to be

greeted by a grenade. He tossed it back and it exploded where the HECU troops had been moments before. Two of the mercs gunned down three of the five unarmed Marines and Sheffield finally saw Berkely pick up a gun and fire three rounds into one of their former captors and took cover again as a hail of bullets went his way. The other surviving Marine picked up a grenade and tossed it at a support column.

Clarke took the distraction to crouch under and join Nathan behind the table. Both of them opened fire at one of the mercs as he tried to make a run for the door. The bullets spattered him blood all over the glass and he fell to the ground leaving only one more in the room.

Berkely and his partner moved around the left of the desk the merc was behind and several gunshots ended the fight. Both of them looked around for their allies who had rescued them and Berkely's face found a smile as Nathan stood up.

"I thought you were dead!" he cried as he tackled Sheffield. "What the hell? You disappeared into that teleporter and I figured you had been vaporized."

"Nope." Replied Sheffield as he was almost suffocated by his friends' happiness. "But we don't have time for this. I am really running low on time."

"For what?" asked Berkely as several more shots concluded the lives of two more mercs who were coming through the door.

"I need to know where the central computer is."

"What are you running low on time-"

"I'll get to that, but first I need to get some stuff from the computer." Berkely looked at him as if he was crazy, but he had known Nathan long enough to trust his judgment no matter how crazy it might seem. He nodded and motioned them to follow him.

20. Vendetta

**Chapter 20- Vendetta**

Hallsworth, Price and Sandler stepped into an elevator and rode it all the way down to the lowest level of the facility. Hallsworth and Price were newly armed with P90's and Sandler had chosen a 12-gauge assault shotgun.

Hallsworth wasn't exactly sure what they were going to find down there, but it looked big and expensive enough that maybe they could use it to force Umbrella to let them out and leave them alone.

The elevator was moving extremely slow and they still had ten levels to go down.

Hallsworth was quiet; he was still trying to swallow the fact that they had just been fighting aliens. He had seen some pretty weird stuff in his time working for Umbrella. Genetically engineered monsters, mutated humans, super soldiers like Nemesis, undead people,

and Lickers. He had thought he'd never be surprised again, but aliens topped everything.

He shook his head and muttered something to him self incoherently.

"Something wrong?" asked Price.

"Just that fact that that we have now seen aliens." He replied.

"Now, we don't know for sure that they are aliens, they could be some experiment that we didn't know about." Said Sandler logically.

"And how then, do you explain the fact that they were teleporting in?" asked Price shortly.

"Who says they were teleporting?"

"What the hell? Balls of light that drop _creatures_," he said, "right in front of us, are not portals?" finished Price. Sandler didn't say anything; he knew he wouldn't win the argument. Even he was convinced they were actual aliens, although he didn't want to admit it.

Hallsworth had a sudden thought that seemed far fetched, but after adding up all the weird things he had seen including the aliens, he decided to mention it.

"What if that marine, Sheffield, is some how involved with these things?"

"What kind of connection could he have?" asked Price not understanding why Hallsworth had said such a random thing.

"I don't know. But it's possible. Don't you find it weird that a marine of all people happens to be in the city and not too long after he disappears these aliens, or what ever they are start showing up?" he asked.

The other two thought about it for a minute and saw where Hallsworth was going.

"Maybe he was the one that made these things start transporting?" asked Sandler more to himself than to the others.

"Perhaps, but I doubt we'll ever know." He said as the elevator came to a stop and the doors slid open revealing a short, but wide hallway, which at the end was a large sliding blast door. "I think we should concentrate on surviving this for now." He said as he pushed past his comrades and made his way cautiously down the hall. Once he got to the door, he swiped his ID card and waited for it to accept it.

The reader buzzed an unaccepted tone and Hallsworth merely stared at it not believing that it wasn't letting him through. He swiped it again and the same thing happened.

"Let me try." Said Sandler as he pulled his own card out and swiped it. The door buzzed once again.

"What do we do now?" asked Price.

"I dunno." Replied Hallsworth.

Sarah Marshall had seen a day straight from the bowels of hell. The worst part was that it wasn't over. They were still in danger and Nathan hadn't come back yet. He'd been gone for the better part of an hour and a half and they were running out of time. She wondered where he was; at the Black Mesa, or what ever they had called it.

Sarah was sitting in a comfortable chair leaning against the wall of the control room and absently looking out the window into the teleportation chamber. She was almost willing the lights to start flashing that signaled her friends return.

This was the first time she had actually had time to relax and collect her thoughts. The first time they had stopped, in the coffee shop, she had fallen right asleep because she had felt safe enough to. Now she didn't have a battle-hardened marine to lean against.

The more she thought about Nathan, the more she decided he was very attractive, even for a twenty-two or three year old. When she had first seen him at school she hadn't noticed his good looks. Now they were all she could think about. His deep sexy blue eyes and light brown hair, those were the features she found most attractive.

Sarah imagined what he looked like under his vest. He most likely had a defined chest and six-pack of abs. That would be her dream. She couldn't resist guys with abs, especially if they came with a defined chest, and Nathan, being a marine, most likely had all of those things.

He was also so gentle and kind for a soldier. She also really liked that about him. His personality was not that of a soldier. He didn't seem like the kind of guy that would kill someone. But he had shown that he was perfectly capable. She wondered if he would adopt her or take her in since she no longer had a family.

All her life, Sarah had known people that were foster kids and she wondered what it would be like to lose one of her parents. Now she knew, but it wasn't like she imagined. She was sad, yes, but not nearly to the extent that she thought she should be. Maybe it was because she was in a life or death situation, and she would have a breakdown if they got out of here alive.

Something on the security monitors caught Sarah's attention. She looked over at it to see three people standing and waving at the camera trying to get her attention.

She got up and walked over to the monitor past the scientist and Trina.

"What's up?" asked Trina.

"There's someone on the screen." She replied. Trina and the scientist, whom they learned was named Dr. Sampson, came over to see.

"That's Hallsworth!" she cried and looked for the intercom button.
"Halls! Its me, Trina, stand back and I'll open the door."

"Trina? What the hell are you doing here?"

"Long story, I'll tell you when you get up here." She said and then turned to Dr. Sampson. "Can you open that door?"

"Um, not at the moment, someone is activating the other machine, incoming portal!" he said just as the lights dimmed and the sphere of light formed. Sarah ran to the window to see Nathan come through, but to her horror, it was Nathan, it was about six Umbrella mercs with their guns trained on her.

"Open that door, but tell them to take their time." Said Trina quietly to Sampson. He did as he was told and instructed Hallsworth to be cautious because the merc had just come through.

Hallsworth would save them; he was more than a match for these mercs, or so the three of them hoped as they saw them disarm Brandon and hit him in the head with his gun, knocking him to the ground, and leaving him unconscious.

Nathan pulled the small disk out of the main computer terminal and slipped it safely into an obscure pocket on his vest. He then made sure to take an extra one and put it into one of the pockets on his ammunition belt. That way if he was captured, and somehow managed to survive, he could give them the dud and keep the real one for himself.

Berkely and Clarke stood at opposite ends of the room keeping the doors covered. The Marine that had survived with Berkely, who's name they learned was Locke, was standing behind Sheffield trying to figure out what he was getting from the massive Black Mesa database.

"What are you trying to do? Did you get some orders we didn't?" asked Locke.

"No, this is going to help some friends of mine live through tonight." Replied Sheffield as he got out of the chair. Locke moved slightly into a defensive stance.

"You can't take that disk. This is a cover-up mission." He said.

"Don't worry, this will find the right hands."

"Trust him." Recommended Berkely from his position at the door. Locke's eyes moved from Sheffield to Berkely and he relaxed.

"Alright."

"You guys should get back to the sector command center." Said Sheffield.

"No, not this time Nathe. You aren't leaving without me." Said Berkely. "You tell me where you went and what this is about. And we

aren't leaving this position until you do." Sheffield looked at Berkely.

"Since when do you give me orders?" he asked. Berkely looked back at him.

"Come on." He said. Sheffield inhaled.

"It's going to sound crazy." He warned. Clarke looked over.

"I'm pretty sure aliens are weirder than your story could be." He said. Nathan nodded and proceeded to tell them what his day had been like.

Hallsworth had immediately gone of the defensive upon hearing the warning about the mercs. They had slowly, cautiously, made their way out the door that had slid open for them, and up the hallway toward the a massive red blast door that said "RESTRICTED" in large white letters. Hallsworth had no idea where he was supposed to go, but going the other way just ended in a wall.

When the three ex-Umbrella guards got to the door, they looked around for a way to get past it so they could take out the mercs. Sandler kneeled down and bashed a floor vent open so they could go through it.

"I don't want to go in there." Remarked Price.

"You can't wait here. No way through that door. We gotta go around." Replied Sandler.

"Damn, I forgot, you're Closter phobic."

"Yeahâ€¦" Replied Price, trailing off.

"You can't do this? Not at all?" asked Hallsworth. Price shook his head.

"No. It's a very small ventâ€¦"

"Alright. Sandler, you wait here. I'll go around and try to get to the control room to open this door. When it opens, you be ready to come in, guns blazing."

"Halls-" started Sandler.

"Stay here." He interrupted as he kneeled and crawled into the vent. Sandler did as he was told and waited with Price. Once Hallsworth had turned the corner that led around the door, he looked in after him, and then back at Price.

"You can fight zombies, genetically engineered monsters, super soldiers, mutants and aliens, but you cant crawl into a vent?" he asked disbelievingly. Price looked back and chuckled.

"Something like that." He replied. Sandler snorted in humor and then slapped Price on the back hard.

"That is really messed up man." He said, and they both laughed.

Hallsworth crawled through the hot, humid vent hoping that it would lead him to where he needed to go.

"That's been pretty much my day." Finished Sheffield. The others stared in disbelief at him.

"Zombies, like undead, get up and walk around to eat you zombies." Confirmed Clarke. Sheffield nodded.

"Yeah."

"We should go." Remarked Berkely. He said it in a quiet voice, as if he couldn't believe what he had just heard, and yet it seemed to make sense. After all, after seeing numerous races of aliens and Black Ops. troops that seemed to have their own agenda, why not zombies and big monster bio weapons.

"I agree." Said Clarke, looking at his watch. 5:30 am. If what Nathan said was true about Raccoon City being nuked at sunrise, that meant they had an hour, hour and a half at absolute most.

"What the hell are you thinking? A civilian company like Umbrella does not have the power to nuke a city, or cover it up." Said Locke. "There is no f-" he was cut off by a sudden penetration through his shoulder that splattered his shoulder all over the wall behind him.

He yelled and instinctively put his hand over the wound when another tore through his vest and into his torso. The other three soldiers dropped to the ground and started firing randomly out the door. It seemed to work, as no more bullets tore into Locke.

Sheffield inched his way across the floor just incase they were waiting for another target. He got to Locke and put his hand on the wound where he was hit in the vest.

"Come on, if we get you back to a checkpoint they can get you some medical attention." He said as he took Locke's arm and pulled it over his neck so he could help the injured marine up. Berkely and Clarke stopped firing and slowly got into a crouching position so they could see out of their respective doors. "Lets go." Said Sheffield as he got to his feet with Locke draped over him.

The small team made their way back the way they came and out into the main hall with all the computers Clarke and Sheffield had been before. Instead of going back out into the large corridor, they took a smaller door that led them into another large corridor.

"This is the way we came in, we circled around from that one cause that door was locked." Said Berkely pointing to the door they had come through. "There is a vent that leads up to the roof and we can just follow that across the compound back to the warehouse since we are on the top level and not underground."

"That's convenient." Said Clarke quietly to himself.

"Where is it?" asked Nathan.

"Up ahead." Said Berkely looking at his PDA.

"There it is, I see it." Replied Clarke as he walked ahead and shouldered his gun. He went to the wall and climbed the wall upward using the narrow wall notches to make his way up. He reached the top, un-shouldered his gun and pushed the vent up and to the side. He then emptied his clip in a circle motion and the top of the vent came crashing down to the floor.

The starlight came flooding in as Clarke grabbed hold of the edge and pulled himself up through the top. A couple of seconds went by and a zip line dropped through the opening. Sheffield motioned for Berkely to climb up and draped Locke over his shoulder.

Berkely was strong enough that he could climb up the rope with a two hundred pound marine on his back and Nathan knew it.

He waited for Berkely to give the okay and then started up himself. It wouldn't be hard getting back to the warehouse. It was getting back to the transporter room that would be difficult. However, trying to convince Clarke and Berkely not join him would be ever harder.

The mercenary team leader, John, was an ex-Vietnam colonel who couldn't seem to grasp the fact that the war was over and had been thirty years. He decided that the Vietnamese government needed punishing for taking over and spreading communism, so he formed his own private army of mercenaries that he used to terrorize not only the Vietnamese, but all communist regimes. Because he had been doing it for a quarter of a century, and had become extremely efficient at it, he had become the most feared and well-known mercenary in the world.

Umbrella had first approached him in 1995 to help them with another T-Virus outbreak. That time it had only been a small town of five hundred people, and all they had to do was retrieve some samples of blood for Umbrella to test. Then the corporation merely dropped several Thermobaric weapons, better known as Fuel-Air bombs, on the town and completely erased it from the face of the Earth. Since it was such a small town, no one ever missed it and John was paid a hefty price for his services to Umbrella.

He was looking forward to his payday for _this _operation. Raccoon City was a big city; there was no way Umbrella was going to cover this up completely. John didn't really care, he just wanted to get paid and get his people out of this hellhole, not to mention Black Mesa.

From the Intel he had received, they had suffered a full-scale Resonance Cascade scenario and the Hazardous Environment Combat Unit had even been called in to clean up because the Black Mesa Security Force wasn't able to handle the situation, but HECU was having a hell of a time just trying to keep key area secure from the aliens. They were the best. They had the best training for indoor, close quarters combat, and unconventional enemies, exactly the kind of warfare that had ensued in the Black Mesa Research Facility.

So now his troops had to deal not only with Umbrella's hideous creations, but aliens as well. John wondered how many of his soldiers would come back. He personally hated Umbrella for all the lives they had extinguished through their carelessness, but he never let it show

and he always did what they asked him to because they had the checkbook.

What John was worried about was this, Corporal Sheffield who had been confirmed to have killed several Umbrella guards single-handedly and no one knew where he had come from. Reports stated that he had been spotted at Black Mesa and even killed several of his men that had taken the control room from the Black Ops. Corps.

John hated anyone who killed his people and he made it a personal vendetta to put a bullet in their skull himself. Sheffield would die before the night was over, and it would be from the nuke. John would see to that.

21. Project: Matrix

Chapter 21- Project: Matrix

COUNTDOWN INITIATED

Time: 4:00 a.m.

Detonation scheduled for: 7:00 a.m. - sunrise

Time until detonation: 3 hours, 0 minutes

Raymonds stood behind the same tech that Major Cain had done hours before when he told her to activate Umbrella's most vile creation to kill Hallsworth and his team. Although Cain hadn't actually said its name, Raymonds still had an idea what he was talking about.

At the time, the creature's existence was what would amount to a myth to anyone who wasn't in a position of power such as field commanders or the high command. But now that Raymonds understood what it was exactly, he wasn't sure he could let it take out Hallsworth. As much as he hated the man, it seemed almost, inhuman to let it take them out.

"It should be here by now, why have I not received any contacts with it?" asked Raymonds to the female tech.

"The tracers are indicating that it is still in the New Mexican desert, Black Mesa most likely. That is where we stored it." She replied.

"Shouldn't it have come through by now?"

"Yes sir, but something is happening at Black Mesa that is preventing it from getting to the Lambda Complex. Did Major Cain say anything about it?" she asked. Raymonds knew the answer; John had explained it to him. He just didn't know if he should disclose the information to this tech. He decided against his better judgment that he should and maybe she could do something to get the monster to City Hall before they destroyed the city.

"Black Mesa has suffered a full scale Resonance Cascade." He said figuring she would know that he was talking about. The tech froze for a full ten seconds before she spoke again.

"An invasion?" she asked quietly. Raymonds nearly jumped when she said that.

"Yes, HECU has even gone in to contain it." He said as soon as he recovered from the shock. She closed her eyes for a moment and then started typing things into the computer.

"Altering protocols," she said. The computer screen changed and started displaying data from the creature. A small figure appeared at the bottom left. It looked like a health bar from a video game; different parts of it were green yellow and red showing damage. Most of the creature was green, but what would be its upper arm was yellow and part of its torso was glowing red, but other than that it seemed to be doing okay.

The screen changed yet again, and displayed several new things.

New Primary Objective Received: Return to Raccoon City- Self defense mode off- Eliminate all threats between position and objective.

Position: Black Mesa Central Command

Objective: Lambda Complex- Cancelled

_ Secondary Teleportation Labs- New Location Objective Confirmed_

Calculating Fastest Routeâ€|â€|â€|â€|â€|.. Elevator in Warehouse 036

"There." Said the tech. "It will arrive within thirty minutes." She typed in one last command.

Receiving New Secondary Objectiveâ€|â€|â€|â€|â€|â€|.Secondary Objective Received-

_ Eliminate Nathan Sheffield with extreme prejudice _

The tech uploaded a picture of him and a chill went up Raymonds' spine. He pitied Sheffield. But the tech had lost her brother to him and he had become somewhat known to the Umbrella and Mercenary personnel.

Clarke's feet touched the hard pavement of the storage area. He looked up the thirty feet to the roof he had just been on and tried to hold the rope steady from Berkely as he struggled not to fall and still hold onto the now unconscious Locke.

Berkely safely touched down and laid Locke on the ground to make sure he still had a pulse. He did and Berkely quickly swung him back up onto his shoulder to get him off the ground.

Since they had been out of the facility, they had realized just how cold it was. Desert nights were extremely chilly and the three of them could see their breath. Locke, although unconscious, was shivering and Berkely feared his body temperature might be dropping.

Sheffield looked over the edge at them.

"Hold tight, I'll be right back." He said. "I thought I heard something. I'm gonna go check it out." With that he disappeared from sight. Berkely and Clarke kept looking up at the edge, shining their flashlights along it.

"Whatâ€¦!" started Clarke. He was interrupted by a loud crash and what sounded like an explosion. Sheffield screamed something but it was drowned out by his gunfire. They listened in horror for a moment to the loud thudding of his automatic rifle.

Clarke started to climb up the rope to see what was going on. He got about halfway up and heard a familiar horrifying sound, the loud screeching of the alien Grunt's hornet gun. He stopped for a moment.

Sheffield's rifle silenced and his body went flying over Clarke's head and landed on the ground below. Nathan rolled when he hit the ground and then lay there trying to recover from the pain and hoping he hadn't broken anything. He got up and grabbed Berkely.

"Come on!" he yelled at Clarke who also dropped and started after them. Sheffield was trying to run as fast as he could, but he had a bad limp from the jump he had just taken. Clarke grabbed him and ran as fast as he could in the way Sheffield was. The ground shook and nearly knocked Clarke off his feet. He looked back over his shoulder and saw a huge monster.

It was about seven and a half feet tall, and looked vaguely humanoid. The monster had no nose. Its only facial features were its four mandibles that made up its mouth, and its eyes that were large, black, and ovular. Its head was covered in what looked like a metal helmet that reflected the starlight as a bluish tint.

The arms were long and extremely muscular and its hands were massive. It was armed with a hornet gun in one hand. The other was free and produced what looked to be extremely sharp claws but only had three fingers. Its massive body was covered in pants and a shirt that were strangely large enough to fit it. A large thick vest covered the shirt and over that was a long black coat that extended down to its unusually large combat boots.

Even more than the vest, it had more strange blue metal armor as shoulder, lower arm, thigh and shin guards. When its mouth was closed, it was hard to even tell that it had a mouth, but when it opened it to speak, the four mandibles opened up like a flower. Something was on its back that looked like a huge sword. Another weapon, what looked like an enlarged version of the FAMAS G2 assault rifle was strapped to its belt. It was the perfect size for the monster to hold like a soldier would.

Its hornet gun was raised and trained on them. Berkely stopped and turned around to look at the monster. All three of the soldiers were turned around, guns trained on the behemoth.

"Drop your weapons." The monster's voice was easily understood but it was deep. The soldiers remained in their positions, not moving at all. "Do not make me repeat myself."

The troops still didn't move. The monster raised its weapon and aimed

at Clarke. He opened fire with the M249 SAW and Berkely joined in. The SAW rounds tore into the creature and made it stumble back giving Clarke and Sheffield enough time to get behind cover. Berkely also dove behind a large metal storage box and quietly set Locke down.

Nathan pulled his pant leg out of him boot and began wrapping and applying the same kind of bandage he had given Trina for her cracked rib.

"I know one of you is Nathan Sheffield. My objective is to terminate Nathan Sheffield." Stated the monster. "If you come out now I will spare your team."

Nathan stopped pumping the air and looked at Clarke who shook his head saying that he wasn't going to let Nathan die for them. He then confirmed what he said by finishing Sheffield's wrap and pulling his pant leg back down so they could go back into the to boot. Sheffield finished tying his boot and got up.

"We need to get to the warehouse." He said. "That thing wont be a match for the tank and all the turrets." He whispered. Several hornets zipped around the corner of the box they were behind and missed them by inches.

Clarke offered Sheffield his SAW and they swapped guns.

"You lay down suppressing fire and I'll make a break for the box Berkely is behind." He said and they both ducked as several more hornets zipped past them.

"You will not survive." Echoed the monsters voice.

"Awful confident aren't we?" yelled Sheffield back. The monster emptied all ten hornets at their position, but all of them missed. The hornets could usually track targets, but not around sharp angles such as the one Nathan and Clarke were behind.

"You have had your chance to surrender Nathan Sheffield, now all of you will die." Replied the creature.

"One question before you kill us," started Sheffield. "What are you?" There was a long pause as if the monster was debating on how to answer it.

"Umbrella Corporation Tyrant-II class bio-weapon. Number 23584." He said. "Project Matrix."

End
file.